

# North Goa



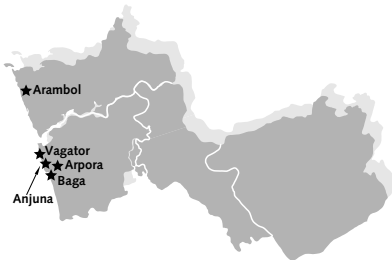
North Goa has the most developed, dynamic and diverse coastline of the state. Candolim and Calangute, by far the most tourist-populated beaches, are lined with hundreds of beach shacks, hotels and restaurants. Further north, Anjuna and Vagator Beaches are home to hippies and the curious folk who wander through to meet them and to dip their toe into the melting pot of subcultures and alternative lifestyles that have permeated here. North of the Chapora River are the quieter beaches of Morjim, Asvem and Mandrem, which are taking their time to develop individual character. Further north still is Arambol, which in recent years has provided respite for party people seeking refuge from the more saturated southern beaches.

The high point of the week is Wednesday, where tourists, local foreigners and traders from all over the country converge on the atmospheric Anjuna flea market. Saturday night is also a big event; the night bazaars of Baga and Arpora attract everyone, making for an eclectic and therefore quintessentially Goan experience.

Head away from the hype to the less discovered inland areas of Bardez, Pernem, Bicholim and Satari, and you will find villages, farmland and a scattering of temples that have retained their authenticity despite all the morphing and mayhem of the coastal areas. Whether explored on a motorcycle or just enjoyed from the beach, this region of Goa must be experienced.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Shop at **Anjuna flea market** (p141) till the sun goes down, then head to a happening beach shack
- Grab a cliffside guesthouse with a balcony overhanging the ocean at **Arambol** (p153)
- Sample local cuisine and purchase items from all over India at the **Saturday night markets** (p129) of Arpora and Baga
- Spend a night on the town with kids from Britain and Bombay in **Baga** (p134)
- Immerse yourself in the surreal world of **Goan parties** (p148) in Anjuna or Vagator



## PANAJI TO FORT AGUADA

### Reis Magos

A classic Portuguese **fort** and **Reis Magos Church**, dedicated to St Jerome, make the small village of Reis Magos worthy of a stop on the way to the beaches. It's not difficult to appreciate the importance of the site that this fort occupies, as it offers protection at the narrowest part of the Mandovi River. The fort was built in 1551 after the north bank of the river came under Portuguese control. It was rebuilt in 1703, in time to assist the desperate defence against the Marathas (1737–39), during which the whole of Bardez, with the exception of the Reis Magos and Aguada forts, was occupied.

Although Reis Magos had the distinction of never being captured by the enemy, it was occupied by a foreign army in 1799 when the British requisitioned both it and Fort Aguada in anticipation of a possible attack by the French. After the British withdrawal in 1813 the Reis Magos fort gradually lost importance, and was eventually abandoned by the military and converted into a jail. It's not open to the public, but it's still worth coming up here for the excellent views.

The little church standing below the fortress walls is made all the more attractive by the imposing black bastions that loom above it. The first church was built in 1555, shortly after the fort itself. A seminary was later added, and over the years it became a significant seat of learning.

Only the church remains, with its steep steps up from the road and fine views of the Mandovi River from the main doors. Outside the church, the lions portrayed in relief at the foot of the steps show signs of Hindu influence, and a crown tops off the façade. The interior of the church is impressively colourful and contains the tombs of three viceroys. Reis Magos is the scene of a colourful **festival** on 6 January, when the story of the three kings is recreated with young local boys acting the parts of the Magi.

Buses run regularly between Betim and Candolim or Calangute, so coming from either direction you can be let off at the Reis Magos junction and then walk the short distance to the church and fort.

### Nerul & Coco Beach

Coco Beach is a lot quieter than other nearby beaches and affords a great view

across the water to Miramar and Panaji (Panjim). One thing that has contributed to the relative quietness of Coco Beach is the fact that there are no water sports here; local fishermen successfully brought an end to them after complaining that the commotion had a negative impact on their livelihood.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the range of accommodation available.

**Albert's Odyssey** (☎ 0832-2401518; r Rs 500) is a great place to stay. Rooms have lots of storage space and hot-water bathrooms. Albert's also organises boat and fishing trips and turns out good food. If you can't find a room here, staff may be able to suggest another place nearby.

Behind Nerul church, **Bai Tereza Beach Camp** (☎ 9890694138/58; www.goabeachcamp.com; 1-/2-/3-/4-person tent incl full board Rs 1300/2200/2900/3600, 1-/2-/3-/4-person tent incl breakfast Rs 795/1190/1385/1580) is a newly established Danish-run camp consisting of iglooesque tents on the far end of the beach, which is probably the most secluded point you can get. Meals are provided by the Danish chef, and the bonfire is lit at night. There is a young and international vibe to this place, though the high prices keep it a tad exclusive.

### Fort Aguada

Standing on the headland overlooking the mouth of the Mandovi River, Fort Aguada (Map p122) occupies a magnificent position, confirmed by the fact that it was never taken by force. This is a very popular spot to watch the sunset, with uninterrupted views north and south. The motivation for building the fort came from the increasing threat of attacks by the Dutch, among others, and work was commenced in 1612.

The fort covers the entire headland, and the river was once connected with the seashore at Candolim to form a moat, entirely cutting off the headland. One of the great advantages of the site was the abundance of water from natural springs on the hillside, which meant that the fort became an important watering point for ships; the spring also led the fort to be named Aguada (*água* is Portuguese for 'water'). The British occupied the fort in 1799 to protect Goa from the French.

Today the main point of interest is the bastion that stands on the hilltop, although

when compared with the overall area surrounded by defences, you realise that this is only a fraction of the fort. The buildings below the bastion on the waterfront now house the state prison, but the old bastion on the hilltop can be visited. In the main courtyard of the fort are the underground water tanks. These huge echoing chambers indicate just how seriously the architects took the threat of a long siege.

The **old lighthouse**, which stands in the middle of the fort, was built in 1864 and once housed the great bell from the Church of St Augustine in Old Goa before it was moved to the Church of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception in Panaji. Unfortunately, at the time of research they weren't letting anyone up to the top.

Nearby, the **new lighthouse** (adult/child Rs 5/3; ☎ 4-5.30pm) can also be visited; cameras are not allowed inside.

A short way to the east of the bastion is the pretty **Church of St Lawrence**, which also occupies a magnificent viewpoint. The Church was built in 1643 to honour St Lawrence, the patron saint of sailors.

South of the church and at the end of the road is **Aguada Jail**, which houses a number of Westerners, mostly on drug charges.

To get to Fort Aguada you can ride a bike or motorcycle or take a taxi along the 4km winding road that heads east from Sinquerim Beach and loops up around the headland. It's an enjoyable motorcycle ride, with good views along the top of the headland. By bicycle there's a steep initial climb, best done in the early morning. Otherwise there's a steep 2km walking trail to the fort that starts just past Marbella guesthouse.

### CANDOLIM & SINQUERIM

☎ 0832 / pop 8600

Candolim Beach and Sinquerim, the beach immediately below Fort Aguada, are now almost entirely the domain of the package-tour companies, although independent travellers can still find some relatively cheap rooms here, especially outside the peak season. Sinquerim Beach is a small curve of sand dominated by the five-star Taj Holiday Village and Aguada Hermitage. For the past couple of years the *River Princess*, a grounded tanker that no-one wants to take responsibility for, has sat forlornly about 500m offshore.

Candolim Beach is a clean, straight stretch of sand running north to Calangute. It's a little quieter, with fewer beach shacks, and tends to attract a slightly older crowd, as well as the few travellers who find Calangute and Baga too busy and Anjuna and Vagator too much of a scene.

### Orientation & Information

The main drag, roughly between Sinquerim in the south and St Anthony's Chapel in the north, is lined with souvenir shops, restaurants, hotels, travel agencies and places to make phone calls or read email. **Davidair** (☎ 2277007; www.com2goa.com) is a reputable travel agency specialising in flights out of Goa and organised tours.

There are numerous currency exchanges offices and travel agencies where you can change money and get cash advances on credit cards. HFDC (near Acron Arcade) and UTI Bank (near Dona Alcino Resorts) have ATMs, and you can change cash and travellers cheques at the State Bank of India. A useful multipurpose place is Arhana Complex (often called the Elephant Shop because of its carved elephants); on the main road, it changes money at good rates, provides tourist information and sells a wide range of carvings and souvenirs.

The post office is near the north end of the village.

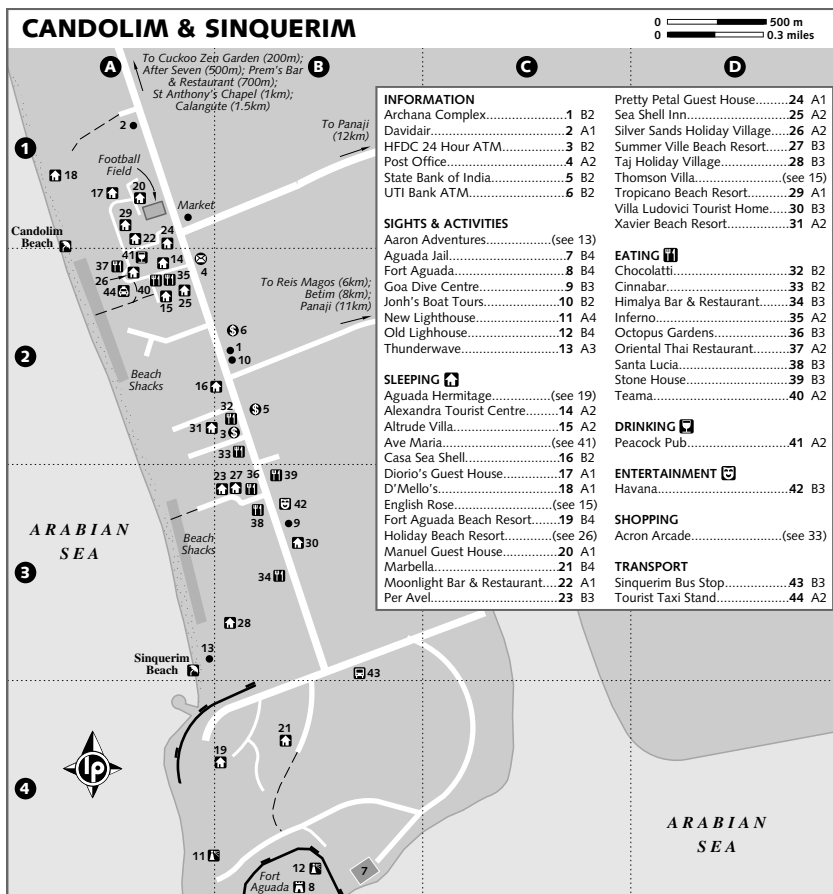
### Activities

#### BOAT TRIPS

**John's Boat Tours** (☎ 2497450, 9822386050, 5620190) has earned its good reputation by providing a decent service, and through a BBC plug that it has milked for all its worth since. It has dolphin-watching trips (Rs 795) and boat rides to the Anjuna flea market (Rs 395), and also does a tour through backwater mangroves (Rs 995). Its dolphin trips operate with a policy of 'no dolphins, no pay'. There are also overnight trips on a Keralan houseboat (Rs 4000). John's is now branching out with 4WD tours covering Dudhsagar Falls (Rs 995) and spice plantations (Rs 850). John's also arranges fishing and snorkelling trips. There are numerous booking agents around town.

#### DIVING

There is a **Goa Dive Center** (☎ 9822157094; ☎ 4-9pm) operating out of Candolim, where you



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can sign up for advanced or beginner PADI-certified courses. It also organises snorkelling trips. For more information visit the Goa Dive Center in Calangute (p128).

### WATER SPORTS

The place to go if you are looking to paraglide, jet-ski, dolphin-watch or banana-boat-ride is in front of Fort Aguada Beach Resort and the Taj Holiday Village on Sinquerim Beach. There are a collection of adventure-sport operators who openly compete with each other; make sure you let them know that you're not staying at one of the nearby resorts. A few choices are **Aaron Adventures** (☎ 2479749), Thunderwave, which is popular with Indian tourists, and Hi-Tide, which also

does return trips to the Anjuna flea market on Wednesday (Rs 350). Prices fluctuate but you can expect to pay around Rs 800 for a jet ski, Rs 1000 for parasailing and between Rs 250 and 450 for a dolphin-watching trip, depending on what's included and how long the tour goes for.

### Sleeping BUDGET

Though Candolim really doesn't have the budget traveller in mind, there are a few pleasant options. Look in areas away from the beach, such as the quiet backstreets.

**Villa Ludovici Tourist Home** (☎ 2479684; d Rs 500) This is a lovely family home with five rooms. The house and its owners have real

### WARNING

The beach might look calm but as many as 50 tourists die every year in the lovely Arabian Sea. In fact, capsizing boats are so common that little is done other than a respectful few days where boats don't operate. Then it's back to business. Those who can't swim are particularly vulnerable but strong undertows have killed many experienced swimmers. If you're heading out on a boat, check that there are adequate life jackets. Also take note of warning signs at beaches and don't assume that a lifeguard will be able to assist you.

character, which makes for a lovely Goan experience. Some guests get so attached they come back year after year.

**Tropicano Beach Resort** (☎ 2489732; d Rs 500) This spot is run by the very hospitable Flossy Vaz. Her rooms are the downstairs ones, which are wrapped around a pleasant garden.

**Dioros Guest House** (☎ 3090713; diorosgoa@yahoo.com; r Rs 500) This is in a striking white building and is run by a hospitable family. Rooms have hot water and private balconies overlooking the well-maintained gardens.

**Manuel Guest House** (☎ 2489729; r Rs 300) This is another decent option, and it's run by a friendly family. Rooms are good value. Discounts flow freely for long-stayers.

The **Altrude Villa** (☎ 2489703) and **Thomson Villa** (☎ 2489297) sit opposite each other, and both have rooms competitively priced at around Rs 400. Choose the one that feels the more hospitable to you.

### MIDRANGE

Most of the accommodation in the Candolim-Sinquerim area is dedicated to the mid-range traveller. Repeat visitors often book months in advance, and it might be worth doing the same.

**Pretty Petal Guest House** (☎ 2489184; www.prettypetalsgoa.com/accom.htm; s/d from Rs 500/700) Pretty Petal is a beacon of cleanliness down an unpaved road. Its grounds and rooms are spectacularly clean and neat, and the women who run the place are wonderfully friendly. There is a security guard posted on the gates and the place feels entirely comfortable and secure.

**Alexandra Tourist Centre** (☎ 2489097, 2489230, 2489250; d with/without AC Rs 1320/880; ☎) With a prime location in the thick of things on Candolim Beach road, this is a good mid-range option with a popular restaurant downstairs and obliging staff.

**Xavier's Beach Resort** (☎ 2479489; xavierbeachresort@yahoo.com; s/d Rs 900/1200) This very pleasant place off a side street has an airy beachside feel. There is a pleasant restaurant, which makes good use of the grounds. Some of the rooms (particularly the singles) can feel a bit like concrete cells so make sure you choose one that's comfortable.

**Per Avel** (☎ 2479074; www.peravelgoa.com; d with/without AC Rs 1200/1000; ☎) A pleasant midrange option. The exterior of the buildings, which accommodate 21 rooms, are painted happy colours, and staff are friendly. Rooms are nothing flash but are cosy enough and reasonable value outside season, when they cost Rs 600. There are various areas that are well suited to idling.

A couple of long-running options are the **Sea Shell Inn** (☎ 2276131; Candolim-Aguada Rd; d incl breakfast Rs 950), the best of the affiliated Sea Shell hotels, and the **Casa Sea Shell** (☎ 2479879; seashellgoa@hotmail.com; Candolim-Aguada Rd; r incl breakfast Rs 850), an unattractive concrete block from the outside. The former is a pleasant white house that displays an old-style charm and is charmingly out of place in this built-up area. There is a restaurant at the front of the Sea Shell Inn that is very popular at night, more for the atmosphere than the food.

Some other options, which all claim (with varying degrees of justification) to be resorts, perhaps on account of their swimming pools:

**Summer Ville Beach Resort** (☎ 2479075; www.summervillebeachresort.com; d Rs 900-1800; ☎) Clean spotless rooms within comfortable reach of the beach.  
**Silver Sands Holiday Village** (☎ 2489744; r Rs 1500; ☎) A range of rooms and cottages, with an enticing swimming pool. It sometimes feels a tad deserted.  
**Holiday Beach Resort** (☎ 2489088; www.holidaybeachresortgoa.com; d Rs 700; ☎) Basic, adequately clean rooms, each with a fridge and bathroom. Some even have a small patio. Despite the swimming pool, calling this a resort is a stretch.

### TOP END

**Marbella** (☎ 2479551; marbella\_goa@yahoo.com; d Rs 1600-2850) Marbella is an old-style place where new-style people set up for weeks.

Hidden down a quiet lane, it's a beautifully restored Portuguese villa with only six rooms. All rooms are fully equipped, though some with more luxury than others. The penthouse suite is the prime choice, though even the ground-floor garden rooms deliver the colonial fantasy.

**Fort Aguada Beach Resort** (☎ 5645858; reservations.goa@tajhotels.com; d Rs 10,000-45,000; 📍) A five-star Taj Hotel, with a foyer and pool that overlooks a long stretch of beach stretching infinitely north, the Fort Aguada Beach Resort is a good choice for its facilities and location.

**Taj Holiday Village** (☎ 5645858; www.tajhotels.com; r Rs 8500-24000; 📍) This is a five-star option without the onerous block-style buildings that come with many multiple-star establishments. Rooms are individual cottages and the grounds are immaculately maintained while still being usable. Beach chairs and umbrella-bedecked tables are strategically placed, and there is a small bar in the swimming pool.

## Eating

Down on the beach are dozens of shacks serving the obligatory Western breakfasts, seafood dishes and cold drinks. There's a good selection of beach shacks on Candolim Beach at the end of Candolim Beach road, opposite the post office. At night though, the beach shacks tend to give way to their competition on the streets unless there is a party going on.

Despite the fact that Candolim is at virtual saturation point with tourist-oriented restaurants, there are still some quiet restaurants that foreigners rarely notice, let alone venture into. If you're up for some real Goan cuisine with real Goans, keep your eyes open and follow your nose.

There are a couple of top-end eating options that are worth splashing out on.

**Banyan Tree** (☎ 276201-10, ext 582; Taj Holiday Village; mains Rs 150-460) Meals at this elegant Thai restaurant are not cheap, but the atmosphere is simply gorgeous; tables are wrapped around the small building, which is dwarfed by the banyan tree next to it. In the evenings, the lighting is so superb that you can feel the romance even if you're just passing on the street.

**After Seven** (☎ 2297957; aftersevenrestaurant@yahoo.com; H No 1/274B, Chapel Lane; mains Rs 400; 📍 from

7pm) Known as After Eight until Nestlé stretched its legal tentacles to Candolim, After Seven (which has consequently had to open an hour earlier to justify the name change!) serves decadent seafood dishes such as king prawns (around Rs 850).

**Stone House** (☎ 2470090; Fort Aguada Rd; mains Rs 150) The food here is great: lots of grilled steaks and seafood (from Rs 300) with random Chinese or pasta dishes thrown in. Music is always well-chosen jazz and blues, and the setting out the front of the solid laterite house is very atmospheric. Sometimes there's live music.

**Inferno** (☎ 9822140130; mains Rs 50-180) Inferno fires up at night (pun very much intended). The décor has a flame theme, and the occasional sizzler that is ordered from the barbecue menu attracts attention as a waiter carries the blazing meal across the open-air restaurant. The menu is quite a stressful thing to work through; there are clay-oven specials such as stuffed naan (flat bread), grilled steaks, lobster and tiger prawns. The vegetarian options don't skimp on flavour.

**Oriental Thai Restaurant** (☎ 3092809; mains Rs 40-200; 📍 noon-2pm & from 6pm Sun-Fri) Next to Candolim Beach car park, the Oriental has wonderful Thai dishes. It also has Thai cooking classes every Wednesday between 2pm and 5pm (Rs 1200 including dinner; call to confirm).

**Cuckoo Zen Garden** (☎ 2489570; www.cuckoozen.com; 📍 7-11pm) With its Taiwanese-Japanese chef, Taiwanese staff, and Taiwanese, Japanese and Chinese food, clean and fresh Cuckoo Zen Garden is one of Candolim's leaders in Asian authenticity.

**Chocolatti** (☎ 2479340; rebelo@sancharnet.in; mains Rs 25-150; 📍 Mon-Sat) The freshly packaged goodies (cakes, biscuits and, of course, home-made chocolates) are pleasant take-away treats, but if one of the few garden tables is free order yourself whatever muffin the ovens happen to baking (Rs 25) or, if you're feeling outlandish, try a piece of cake (Rs 60).

**Prem's Bar & Restaurant** (☎ 5616773; 3951086; mains Rs 80-140) Not as pricey as it looks, this place has a great breakfast menu to wake up to. The atmosphere lends it class; tables under umbrellas in a green patch of garden make it feel a world away from the road. At night it's lit up in a way that seems to boost it up a rung on the style ladder.

**Teama** (☎ 2489774; 5625870; www.teamagoa.com) This is a proper restaurant with the laid-back feel of a beach shack. There's a pleasant rooftop eating area, but at night the thing to do is grab a table by the side of the street and watch passers-by. It's near the Candolim Beach car park.

Other options worth mentioning:

**Santa Lucia** (☎ 9822104134; mains Rs 130-240; 📍 from 6.30pm) Primarily Italian, with some 'European' style concoctions thrown in. A 'Zurich-style veal' will set you back Rs 200.

**English Rose** (mains Rs 40-100) Laid-back crowd and English fare. It's down the lane from Teama.

**Octopus Garden** (mains Rs 70-200) A pleasant 'seafood-and-steak house' with attentive service, opposite the Stone House.

**Himalya Bar & Restaurant** (mains Rs 50-80) This small Tibetan restaurant (formerly Hue Lan's Tibetan Kitchen) is one of the most low-key budget places to eat in these parts. Vegetarian fried *momos* (Tibetan dumplings) cost Rs 80.

**Cinnabar** (☎ 5643671; Acron Arcade; 📍 8am-midnight) A popular spot for its real coffee and extensive outdoor seating in comfortable cane chairs. The only interruption to your newspaper perusal will be the excellent service.

## Drinking

Almost every restaurant in Candolim stays open late and becomes predominantly a drinking venue with food on the side. In light of the fact that restaurants are now doubling as late-night drinking venues, most of the pubs that were in town have closed down under the weight of competition.

Still in the game is the **Peacock Pub** (☎ 323090217), which is claimed by its proprietors, the Johnsons, to be 'Goa's only real English pub'.

## Entertainment

Around the festive season, the beach shacks get into party mode with dance floors and pumping music. At other times though, the shacks wind down when it gets dark and the crowds move away from the beach to the busy streets or the clubs of Calangute.

**Havana** (☎ 3952973; Havana\_goa@yahoo.co.in; 📍 from 7pm) is a recently opened Latino restaurant. The chairs scattered around the garden give off more of a lounge-bar than restaurant feel. There is live music and various theme nights. Some nights are more alive than others; at times staff outnumber customers.

## Shopping

Along the roads leading to the beach (particularly Candolim Beach road) there are wall-to-wall tourist shops selling clothes, jewellery and other trinkets. Along Fort Aguada Rd there are plenty of shops; heading towards the fort you'll even find boutique furniture and homeware shops. Recent years have seen a rise in the number of shopping arcades in the area.

**Acron Arcade** (☎ 5643671; www.acronarcade.com; 283 Fort Aguada Rd) This shopping arcade has a Sankars bookshop, clothing, jewellery, art and other stores as well as a Cinnabar, where you can indulge in overpriced coffee and cakes.

**Ashoka Jewellers** (☎ 2489996; www.ashokajewellers.com; Shop 5-6 Magnum Resorts, Candolim) This store gets high praise from return customers.

## Getting There & Around

There are frequent buses between Sinquerim and Calangute or Mapusa (Rs 12). The buses stop at the T-junction at the

### THE PINTO REVOLT

In 1787, Candolim was the scene of the first serious attempt to overthrow the Portuguese. The founders of the conspiracy were mostly churchmen, angry at the racial discrimination that meant they were not allowed to occupy the highest clerical positions. Two of them, Caetano Francisco Conto and Jose Antonio Gonsalves, travelled to Portugal to plead their case in the court at Lisbon. Unsuccessful in their attempts to remove the injustice, they returned to Goa and started plotting at the home of the Pinto family in Candolim. Gradually the number of conspirators grew as army officers and others joined the cause.

The plans were near enough to completion for a date to have been fixed when the plot was discovered by the Portuguese authorities. A total of 47 conspirators, including 17 priests and seven army officers, were arrested. The lucky ones were sentenced to the galleys or deported, while 15 of the less fortunate were executed in Panaji and their heads mounted on stakes.

southern end of the main road. There are also a few buses from Panaji (Rs 7, 20 minutes) via Betim and Nerul. If you're headed to Panaji it's easy enough to flag down a bus as it passes every 10 to 15 minutes.

The Candolim Beach tourist taxi stand, near Silver Sands Holiday Village, has a list of 'set' prices for trips. A taxi to Dabolim Airport costs Rs 540.

You can hire bicycles near the taxi stand and there's another stall renting out bikes on the road to the Aguada Hermitage.

## CALANGUTE & BAGA

☎ 0832 / pop 15,800

This is the package tourist's heaven and the cynical backpacker's hell. This broad stretch of sand was the first beach where overland travellers settled in the 1960s before moving on to Anjuna and further afield, but Calangute managed to evolve and retain the title of most popular beach in the state, becoming the epicentre of Goa's rapidly expanding package-tourist market. This is India's answer to Ibiza and, in the high season at least, is the most overhyped, overpriced, overcrowded strip of mayhem in the state.

The village, once nestled between marshland and sand dunes among a sea of coconut palms, is now a mass of concrete hotels and guesthouses stretching almost without a break from Calangute to Baga. Calangute Beach itself is dotted with sun beds, spit-roasting tourists and meandering cows.

So, why do people keep coming? There's no denying there's plenty going on. There is a range of places to stay, some of the best restaurants in Goa, glitzy shopping malls, and all the touts, taxis, trinkets and beach bars you'll ever need. Up at the northern Baga end, the beach is a less crowded and the landscape more interesting.

## Orientation

The actual town of Calangute is urban sprawl, and on the main roads you couldn't feel further from the beach. The advantage to all this development is that Calangute is not all about tourists; if you look hard down side streets you'll find a whole other world – where it feels more like India than the UK, and where locals are genuinely surprised to find you.

South Calangute isn't yet as developed as central Calangute to the north and even

once-quiet Candolim to its south. Give it time though; any space these days is being snapped up Monopoly-style by property developers looking to cram in another hotel or shopping arcade.

The covered bridge that crosses Baga river is aptly dubbed the 'bomb shelter'. It's a notorious place for traffic accidents so take particular care whether you're crossing on wheels or by foot.

## Information

### BOOKSHOPS

**Literati** (☎ 2277740; books@literati-goia.com; E/1282, Gaura Vaddo, Calangute; ☎ 10am-7pm Thu-Tue) A lovely bookshop café off the road towards Candolim. It serves basic drinks and snacks that you can enjoy in the enclosed courtyard while browsing through a pile of books. There is an interesting selection of second-hand books, and a good new book section with a strong focus on Indian writers.

**Oxford Bookstore** (☎ 09326060647; www.oxfordbookstore.com; ☎ 10am-7pm) Just at St Anthony's Chapel; this place looks glitzier on the outside than its books do on the inside.

**Rama Books** (☎ 2279544) You can buy and trade books here. It has a collection of English, German, French and some Italian, Dutch, Swedish, Spanish and Japanese titles – in no particular order beyond that. Literary gems are few and far between. Prices are random but consistently high. Located at the roundabout.

### INTERNET ACCESS

At the time of research, many of the numerous Internet cafés in the area were charging Rs 60 per hour. The further away from the tourists you get, the cheaper rates become; shop around down the alleyways and you may find access for Rs 40 or 50.

**Mubli** (per hr Rs 60; ☎ 9am till late) You can order basic food and drinks while you surf at this Internet café. There are only five computers but the pleasant rooftop terrace makes it a nice place to email your friends about emailing from a rooftop terrace in Goa.

### MONEY

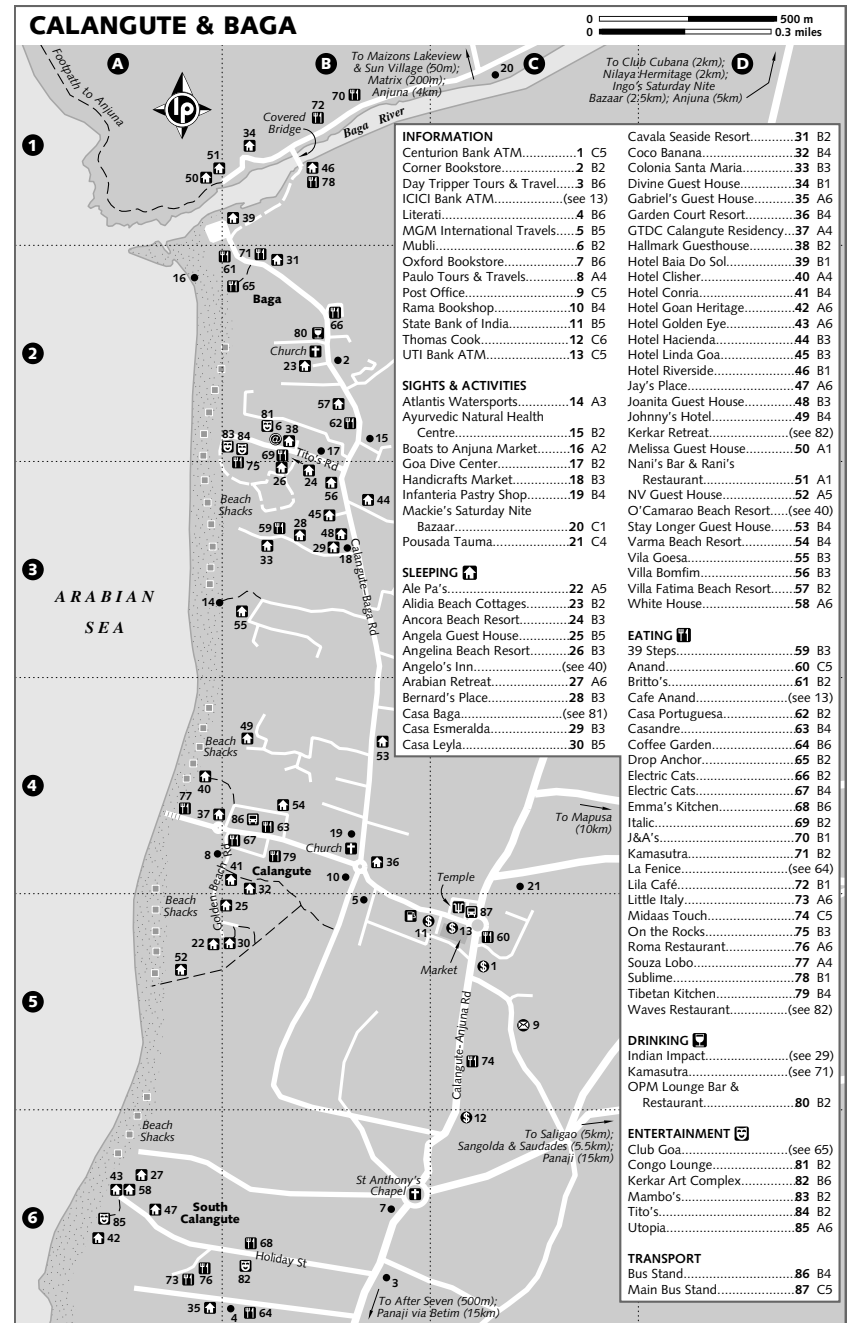
There are plenty of exchange offices in both Calangute and Baga. It's also convenient to use the foreign-exchange and credit-card services of a reputable travel agency.

**Centurion Bank ATM** (Calangute-Anjuna Rd)

**ICICI Bank ATM** (☎ 24hr) Near the market.

**State Bank of India** (Calangute) Will change cash and travellers cheques.

**UTI Bank ATM** (☎ 24hr) Near the market; accepts international cards.



## TELEPHONE

There are many places in both Calangute and Baga where international phone calls can be made quickly and easily.

## TOURIST INFORMATION

**GTDC Residency** (☎ 2276109; Calangute) There is no tourist office as such, but the staff at this hotel (p131), run by the Goa Tourist Development Corporation (GTDC), can usually help out with specific queries or with booking GTDC tours.

## TRAVEL AGENCIES

**Day Tripper Tours & Travel** (☎ 2276726; www.daytrippergoa.com) On the main Calangute–Candolim road, this is a good travel agency specialising in trips within Goa and interstate, as well as flights.

**MGM International Travels** (☎ 2276249; www.mgmtravel.com) Near the roundabout in the market area, MGM is the most established travel agency in Calangute. Good for booking long-distance buses.

## Sights & Activities

### BEACHES

The main activity in Calangute is lazing on the beach, and there's no shortage of sun beds and umbrellas on this crowded strip. Most beach shacks will let you use their sun beds for free if you're eating or drinking at their shack, although if it's busy there's a charge of around Rs 50. Vendors are restricted from working on the beach and police often make a show of patrolling, but that doesn't stop people selling sunglasses, sarongs, massages and ear-cleaning services.

### ART GALLERIES

A real asset in south Calangute is the **Kerker Art Complex** (☎ 2276017, 2276509; www.subodhkerkar.com). It is primarily the gallery of Subodh Kerker, whose work is displayed in every nook and cranny, but is also a well-used cultural space. Every Tuesday night, between 6.45pm and 8.30pm, is a classical dance and music performance (Rs 600). The complex also has the fantastic Waves Rest-aurant (p132) and there are a few rooms at Kerker Retreat (opposite).

If you're interested in art, see what's happening at **Sangolda** (p135), a spectacular old building converted into a decadent shop that looks more like a museum and gallery. Sometimes the exquisite space around the café is used for exhibitions.

There are a few 'galleries' around town, but the term is often synonymous with 'shop'.

## WATER SPORTS

There are numerous water-sport businesses that operate at Baga Beach. One example is **Atlantis Watersports** (☎ 9890047272; www.atlan tiswatersports.com), which offers parasailing (Rs 1300), windsurfing (Rs 400 per hour) and water-skiing (Rs 700 per 10 minutes), among other things. You'll find that negotiating a discount is not an enormous challenge.

It's not difficult to find an operator on Calangute Beach; they'll find you. Operators usually hang around the steps leading to the sand.

The main office of **Goa Dive Center** (☎ 9822 157094; www.goadivecenter.com; Tito's Rd) is here on Tito's Rd. It runs beginners' courses (Rs 2700), which include pool time, class time and an ocean dive. For the more benign sportsperson there is also snorkelling (Rs 1000 including mask and fins).

## BOAT TRIPS

Boat trips to see dolphins or out to Coco Beach can be arranged through water-sports operators, **Day Tripper Tours & Travel** (☎ 2276726; www.daytrippergoa.com) or **John's Boat Tours** (☎ 2479780) in Sinquerim.

On market day (Wednesday), motorised outrigger boats regularly make the trip around the headland to Anjuna Beach (Rs 50 one way), ferrying people from Baga Beach to the flea market.

## YOGA & AYURVEDA

There is an extraordinary range of Ayurvedic treatment centres in Baga and around, and it's nigh-on impossible to know where to start. Ask around.

One that has been recommended for its range of services is the **Ayurvedic Natural Health Centre** (ANHC; ☎ 2409275, 2409036; www.healthandayurveda.com), set on 1.4 hectares of land. Don't be shy about dropping in; the staff are extremely hospitable and are good at explaining Ayurvedic health. The centre runs free guided tours between 10.30am and 5.30pm, Monday to Saturday. The ANHC has concocted a 2½-hour programme where you get to sample a gamut of treatments, and can arrange pick-up from your hotel. It also runs yoga classes.

A more upmarket option for Ayurvedic treatment is the exclusive **Pousada Tauma** (☎ 2279061; www.pousada-tauma.com; r €215-330; 📍), which has accommodation and treatment

## AYURVEDA

With its roots in Sanskrit, the word Ayurveda is derived from *ayu* (life) and *veda* (knowledge); it is the knowledge or science of life. The principles of Ayurvedic medicine were first documented in the Vedas some 2000 years ago, but it is reputed to have been practised for centuries prior to its documentation.

Ayurveda sees the world as having an intrinsic order. Illness is a departure from this, a loss of balance or equilibrium. Fundamental to Ayurvedic philosophy is the belief that we all possess three *doshas* (humours): *vata* (wind or air); *pitta* (fire); and *kapha* (water and earth). Together these are known as the *tridoshas*, and disease is the result of imbalance among them. Each individual may express various aspects of each, but usually one type predominates. If there is deficiency or excess of any *dosha*, disease can result – an excess of *vata* may result in dizziness and debility; an increase in *pitta* may lead to fever, inflammation and infection. *Kapha* is essential for hydration and lubrication; a deficiency here could produce painful limbs and influenza-type illness.

Ayurvedic treatment aims to restore the balance of the *doshas*, and hence good health, principally through two methods: *panchakarma* (internal purification) and massage. The body can be purified through the elimination of toxins orally, nasally and anally. Curiously, Ayurvedic internal purification is far less popular with tourists than the oil massage component! Ayurvedic massages are available all over Goa and involve a massage with warm medicated oil, followed by a steam bath. This is a relaxing way to pass an hour, but gaining any long-term benefits may require rather more dedication – usually a 15-day or longer commitment, which will generally involve an Ayurvedic diet, exercises and a range of treatments as well as regular massages. If you want to learn more, pick up a copy of *Ayurveda: Life, Health & Longevity* by Dr Robert E Svoboda, or check out www.ayur.com.

packages. Its excellent, individually styled rooms are set around its secluded pool.

As with other beach towns in Goa, many places offer yoga courses, reiki, massage and Ayurvedic treatments; ask around or look for signs. The ever crowded **Infantaria Pastry Shop** (☎ 2277421; Unta Wado, Calangute) has a notice board out the front where you might stumble across something. Alternatively, head for Johnny's Hotel (p131), which has yoga on the rooftop and runs reiki courses.

## MARKETS

There are two Saturday night markets in the Baga area that make a pleasant change from the hype of the Anjuna flea market. They're much smaller, there's not as much hard sell and they're held in the cool of the evening. The emphasis is as much on food stalls and entertainment as it is on the usual collection of handicraft, jewellery and clothing stalls.

**Ingo's Saturday Nite Bazaar** (🕒 6pm-midnight Sat Nov-Mar) at Arpora, halfway between Baga and Anjuna, is spacious and very well organised, with live music and fire-twirling at the heart of things. Food stalls are set up by restaurants around the area, so come

with an empty stomach and sample lots. There are outdoor bars, and you can find an enormous amount of clothes, handicrafts, jewellery and other miscellany. Ingo's is immensely popular with visitors, but is a source of contention among many locals who are concerned about the cultural threat it poses to the youth of the area and the traffic congestion it causes.

**Mackie's Saturday Nite Bazaar** (🕒 6pm-midnight Sat Nov-Mar), in the original location of the Saturday night market (before the two organisers parted company), is a smaller Goan-run affair. The entertainment here is not as edgy as Ingo's. It's within walking distance from Baga.

## WALKING

If you're feeling energetic, a good walk is to cross the Baga River, either via the covered bridge or along the beach at low tide, and keep going for about 30 minutes around the headland to Anjuna Beach.

## Sleeping SOUTH CALANGUTE

**Kerker Retreat** (☎ 2276017; www.subodhkerkar.com; r Rs 2000) Attached to the Kerker Art Complex and Waves Restaurant, the retreat is an

afterthought to the art – and the richer for it. There is a kitchenette on every floor of the three-storey guesthouse, with a fridge, a stove and basic cooking facilities. Rooms all have bathroom facilities.

**Jay's Place** (☎ 2277074, 9890539130; jaysplacegoa@hotmail.co.uk; r Rs 2000) One of the newest (and already one of the nicest) on this strip of Holiday St, Jay's Place stands out because both the building and grounds are immaculate. The five rooms are spacious and airy, with shiny immaculate floors. Some rooms have adjoining bathrooms, others have en suites. The beach is a four-minute walk away. The owners of Jay's have arranged for their guests to have access to the pool across the road.

**Arabian Retreat** (☎ 2279053; arabianretreat@yahoo.com; d with/without AC Rs 900/800, both incl breakfast; 🍷) Rooms at this great-value gem are unusually large, with two separate sitting areas and two entrances. Every room has a TV and fridge.

**Gabriel Guest House** (☎ 2279486; fax 2276509; r Rs 800) The main feature of low-key, lovely Gabriel is its garden restaurant, which dishes out very nice Goan cuisine. It has 12 rooms with private facilities. You'll find it tucked down a lane with busy streets on either side.

Other smart choices that are particularly good for beach access:

**Hotel Goan Heritage** (☎ 2276761-4, 2276253; www.goanheritage.com; Gaura Vaddo; d standard/deluxe Rs 2450/2875; 🍷 🍷) A family-friendly resort with a fenced-off pool and play equipment.

**White House** (☎ 2277938; fax 2277356; r Rs 1200) Justifiably popular with well-maintained grounds, comfortable rooms and a busy little restaurant.

**Hotel Golden Eye** (☎ 2277308, 2277309; info@hotelgoldeneye.com; d with/without AC Rs 750/1000, r deluxe Rs 2000-2500; 🍷) Prime choice for beach proximity; you actually have to walk on sand to get here.

#### CENTRAL CALANGUTE

**Coco Banana** (☎ 2276478, 2279068; www.cocobanana.goa.com; d Rs 500-1500) This is a favourite among those fortunate enough to have stayed there. Run by a charismatic Swiss-Goan couple, Marina and Walter Lobo, Coco Banana is in some ways a slice of Goa the way it was 10 years ago. Rooms are cottage style and set in friendly gardens decorated with statues, mosaic tiles and even the tombstone of Lulu the cat.

**Casa Leyla** (☎ 2276478, 2279068; www.cocobanana.goa.com; ste Rs 1500) Another great choice if you're looking to enjoy the beach and your own company. These two self-contained apartments are hidden among other houses a short walk from the beach. Its owner's frustrations at the demise of his town are emblazoned on the wall with a mural reading 'Tourists please shut up! Quiet go to sleep or beach after 10pm'. Units have a separate bathroom, bedroom and lounge area, and the top-storey unit has a balcony.

**Almeida Villa** (☎ 279358; zaccaall@hotmail.com; r Rs 350) A good option for long-term stayers, Almeida has three rooms above the family home. The spacious, secure rooms are good value given they have hot water. Discounts are available for longer stays. The rooms open up onto a communal balcony, which is the perfect place to be lazy.

**Varma Beach Resort** (☎ 2276077; www.calangutebeach.com; d from Rs 800; 🍷 🍷) Along the road parallel to the main road in Calangute, Varma Beach Resort is a nice place away from the hullabaloo. It has a nicely maintained pool and gardens. Rooms with balconies overlooking the pool are the best. Travellers with children may appreciate the secluded grounds, which are a safe distance from main roads and busy beaches.

**O'Camarao Beach Resort** (☎ 2276229; camarao@rediffmail.com; r Rs 800-1000) Of the accommodation in the warren of lanes just off the beach, the best of the bunch is this comfortable resort with low-key rooms around a relaxed quiet garden. It's only 100m or so from the beach.

The cheaper options in the same spot are **Angelo's Inn** (☎ 2282505; r Rs 300-600) and **Hotel Clisher** (☎ 2276873; r Rs 700), which has a few rooms and great food.

Other options worth giving a go: **Ale Pa's** (☎ 2276701, 2277479; r Rs 600) The 12 well-maintained rooms, each with a bathroom and hot water, are perfectly located a short walk to the beach.

**Hotel Conria** (☎ 2497261, 98050761480; r Rs 350) A friendly budget option, if there's a room available.

**International Guesthouse** (☎ 9822689484; r Rs 250-350). Good price and good beach view. Rooms in this big white building have a bathroom. There's also a low-key beach-shack restaurant attached.

**Garden Court Resort** (☎ 2276054; mata\_goa@sancharnet.in; Umta Vaddo; r standard Rs 300-350, larger Rs 800) A pleasant old place run by a very pleasant family. It's at the busy roundabout.

#### CALANGUTE TO BAGA

##### Budget

**Hallmark Guesthouse** (☎ 2275030; r Rs 500) Hallmark is a great-value choice that has managed to create a quiet place in an otherwise loud area. The building is shaded by trees, and rooms are enormously spacious for their price. All rooms have access to the balcony that surrounds the building, beds have mosquito nets and there is a general airy feel to the place. The grounds and the room are kept proudly tidy by the friendly staff.

**Johnny's Hotel** (☎ 2277458, 2094795; johnnys\_hotel@yahoo.com; 1st-/2nd-/3rd-fl r Rs 400/500/600) Johnny's is a sociable and genuine place to stay that's popular with backpackers. There is no hot water but Johnny and co will bring you buckets on request. There are also yoga classes on the rooftop in the evening. It's a good base for getting yourself initiated into the world of yoga and reiki.

**Joanita Guest House** (☎ 2277166; r Rs 300-350) Here's an opportunity to experience the hospitality of a real Goan family in an area otherwise censored to tourists. Down a small laneway off the main road, Joanita Mendonca has four basic rooms out the back and some marginally larger ones out the front. Each room has a small veranda and bathroom.

Other basic places to hang your hat: **Stay Longer Guest House** (☎ 2276969; r Rs 600) Has 17 clean but overpriced budget rooms. Good location if you're a Tito's junkie.

**Angela Guest House** (Rs 200-400) A true backpackers' establishment with six basic rooms.

**Ancora Beach Resort** (☎ 2276096, 2279787; ancora@goatelcom.com; r Rs 650)

##### Midrange

**Hotel Riverside** (☎ 22773377, 2276186; www.hotelriversidebaga.com; r Rs 1300; 🍷) Nicely located on the river, Hotel Riverside has rooms with balconies overlooking north Baga. The Hibiscus restaurant isn't a bad feature either. At night, a balcony room is perfectly delightful.

**Hotel Hacienda** (☎ 2277348, 2276511; r with/without AC Rs 1500/800; 🍷) The slightly interesting design of the building, with wandering Escheresque stairs, makes it a warm place for a large building. There is a pleasant eating area in the courtyard. Rooms themselves are basic, but clean and spacious. Most have a balcony.

**GTDC Residency** (☎ 2276109; d with/without AC Rs 800/500; 🍷) It's getting as tired as the rest of them, but the GTDC Residency is well placed if you want to be in the heart of action with easy beach access.

If you can't find a place to stay, the following should do the trick:

**Casa Esmeralda** (☎ 2277194; san\_enterprise@yahoo.com.in; r with/without AC Rs 950/750; 🍷) Well-priced rooms. The Indian Impact restaurant is attached.

**Bernard's Place** (☎ 2276712; bernardsplace@hotmail.com; d Rs 1500) Good midrange option with a popular restaurant-pub that serves sugary sherbet drinks.

**Angelina Beach Resort** (☎ 2279145, 2279268; angelinabeachresort@rediffmail.com; r Rs 600-900) Not everyone's favourite place, but great if you want to be in the party zone. Rooms fill up with Indian party seekers over Christmas.

##### Top End

**Casa Baga** (☎ 2276957, 22892903/31; casabaga@sancharnet.in; 40/7 Saunto Vaddo, Baga; d incl breakfast Rs 6000; 🍷) A brand-new world-class hotel with loads of charm. The 11 rooms in the main building have four-poster beds and decorative mosquito nets, and face the Arabian Sea. The white porcelain bathrooms are elegant affairs, though not nearly as thrilling as those in the four rooms around the pool, where open-air bathrooms allow you to bathe under the sun and stars. Furniture and fittings have been imported from Bali, and the stone floors add class.

**Colonia Santa Maria** (☎ 2276107; www.csmgoa.com; Cobra Vaddo, Baga Beach; d Rs 2750; 🍷 🍷) This is an upmarket establishment that manages to maintain an unpretentious air. There is no ocean view from the pool, but the eating area near it is lovely. The whitewashed buildings and the neat and comfortable rooms give Colonia Santa Maria a fresh feeling.

**Villa Bomfim** (☎ 2279384, 2281069; www.villabomfim.com; r Rs 1950-2450; 🍷) This pleasant place, with a trippy mosaic pool, has rooms in four fresh buildings. The interesting colour scheme makes the place look like confectionary. There is a nice restaurant specialising in seafood. You'd have to be committed to pay Rs 4500 to 5500 over Christmas.

**Vila Goesa** (☎ 2277535, 2281120; www.vilagoesa.com; r Rs 1670-2700) Vila Goesa is set in a quiet area 200m or so back from the beach, with its own garden path leading to it. Vila Goesa has pleasant rooms scattered through gardens and a restaurant on site.

**Hotel Linda Goa** (☎ 2276066; www.hotellindagoa.com; r Rs 2500; 🍷) Fairly characterless rooms in a fairly characterless building, but pleasant enough if you can get one overlooking the pool.

## BAGA

**Cavala Seaside Resort** (☎ 2276090, 2277587; www.cavala.com; s without AC Rs 600, d Rs 850-2000; 🍷 🍷) This is a prime choice, and repeat visitors rave about it. The outside of the resort is English manor-style brick, with greenery growing over everything but the windows. Long high corridors have black-and-white tiles, and there are pool and suite rooms across the road at Cavala's Banana Republic, which has a laid-back party vibe. As the rooms were built at different times they vary in style and character. The atmosphere down at the restaurant is one reason people keep coming back.

**Alidia Beach Cottages** (☎ 2276835; alidia@rediffmail.com; r/st Rs 800/2500) Alidia is a pleasant place that's in the heart of Baga but feels pleasantly far away from everything. To get to it, you have to walk through the manager's back yard. There are several areas amid the rooms for enjoying a drink, including the pleasant open-air restaurant. The suite has an ocean view and, at the top of a cast-iron spiral staircase, a rooftop balcony that could comfortably host 40 of your closest friends.

**Villa Fatima Beach Resort** (☎ 2277418, 2497103; www.villafatima.com; Baga Rd, Calangute Baga, Saunta Vaddo; r with AC Rs 1500, without AC Rs 800-1000; 🍷 🍷) An unabashedly quiet place to stay, with statues of crocodiles and turtles in the garden. There is a basic bar and pool table in the courtyard, and a small clean pool out the back – the sort of pool you used to swim in at your friends' house in the suburbs. This is a popular backpacker choice, though it has some midrange rooms with a budget vibe.

**Hotel Baia Do Sol** (☎ 2276084, restaurant 3375482; baiadosol@ndnaik.com; r Rs 2500) This place's rooms are overpriced, but they have a pleasant view over the Baga River. There's also a restaurant, Aquamarine, on the premises. It's nicely located close to the action at Britto's.

## NORTH OF BAGA RIVER

**Divine Guest House** (☎ 5623550; divinehome@satyam.net.in; s/d Rs 700/1200) This righteously named

guesthouse is very proper; everywhere you turn is another passage from the bible advising good behaviour. Despite its uprightness, there's a homely air and a nice courtyard eating area.

**Nani & Rani's** (Nani's Bar & Rani's Restaurant; ☎ 2276313, 2277014; r Rs 450) At the end of the river, this is a soulful place run by a friendly family. The high ceilings lend character to the house, and guests enjoy lingering on the balcony for long breakfasts. There are 16 rooms and a self-contained cottage that is a bargain if you can get it for a long-term stay (it's the same price as the rooms).

**Melissa Guest House** (☎ 2279583; r Rs 800) If you can't get in to Nani & Rani's, plan B would be to head to this nearby guesthouse, which has some basic rooms.

**Sun Village** (☎ 52279409; www.desouzahotels.com; r Rs 8000) A tasteful top-end choice away from the hustle and bustle of Baga. Rooms have divine balconies overlooking a lovely patch of Goan landscape.

**Maizons Lakeview** (☎ 2279389; www.maizons.com; r Rs 1500; 🍷) Near Sun Village but without the same polish, Maizons is a nicely situated resort of 140 rooms in a few well-kept buildings. There's a pleasant pool near the river.

## Eating

### SOUTH CALANGUTE

**Waves Restaurant** (☎ 2276017; Kerker Art Complex; mains Rs 160-220) The brainchild of resident artist Subodh Kerker, Waves is a celebration of creativity with artistic attention to detail: the coasters are ceramic paint pallettes and in the glass holding the serviettes are a few paintbrushes. The spinach and mushroom crepe (Rs 180) and the Goan prawn curry (Rs 150) both exemplify why the restaurant describes itself as serving 'art cuisine'; dishes are creative interpretations of traditional fare.

**Coffee Garden** (☎ 9890200840; mains Rs 90-180; ☎ 9am-midnight) An Italian cafeteria that takes ingredients seriously, Coffee Garden offers real espresso (Rs 30) and genuine gelato (Rs 110 to 170). Fresh pastas (around Rs 170) are made with imported cheeses, olive oils and salamis, and showcase the authenticity on offer here. This adaptable Italian establishment even offers a full English breakfast (Rs 130), which goes down best with the morning paper. The atmosphere is

well thought out: you can play chess on the balcony or simmer in the garden. Dinner is served upstairs in La Fenice by the same attentive people.

**Emma's Kitchen** (☎ 9890392073; emmajgoa@yahoo.com; mains Rs 150-250) The latest on the list of English establishments geared towards English patrons, Emma's is a minimalist but elegant affair on a terrace. Tablecloths, full English breakfasts and traditional mains (including beef-and-red-wine casserole served with garlic potatoes and vegetables for Rs 250) suggest that Emma caters for the more discerning English traveller – as opposed to the Englishman who discusses cultural difference in terms of beer.

**Nirvana** (mains Rs 40-150) This is a nice place to eat near the beach. It's open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and serves beach-shack food to foreign and domestic tourists. It's opposite Hotel Golden Eye.

**Midaas Touch** (☎ 2282808/9; www.midaastouch.com; mains around Rs 150; ☎ 11.30am-midnight) Worth mentioning if only to explain the mystery of the advertisements all over the Goa, this mother ship of primary colours is here, in all its oversized glory.

Two Italian restaurants with bona fide Italian chefs are vying for your patronage: **Little Italy** (☎ 3953597; www.littleitaly-india.com; 136/1 Guaravaddo, South Calangute; mains Rs 150-350) A grand, if slightly tacky, building just off Holiday St. The entirely vegetarian food gets mixed reviews. At the time of research a swimming pool was under construction here.

**Roma Restaurant** (☎ 9822950869, 9226415992; mains Rs 90-340; ☎ 8.30am-3pm, 6.30-11pm) More low-key and just around the corner from Little Italy, this place is basked in orange candlelight and classical music.

### CENTRAL CALANGUTE

**Casandre** (Golden Beach Rd; mains Rs 100-150) This elegant restaurant, set on the veranda of a colonial Portuguese building, seems unperturbed by the urban busyness around. It is an oddly placed Goan oasis on an otherwise rough-and-ready strip of road.

**Souza Lobo** (☎ 2766463, 281234; www.souzalobo.com; mains Rs 80-250) Souza Lobo is something of a leader on the beach and gets good reports. It pleasantly faces the sea, and you even have the option of dining on the beach. Its increasing popularity has made it increasingly classy – and pricey.

**Rock Café** (Steak House; mains Rs 80-250) A meaty place popular with meaty English tourists.

It's in an odd location, heavily doused in traffic fumes. There is a selection of hearty food such as jacket potatoes (Rs 130 to 160) and pepper steak with jacket potatoes and salad (Rs 220). If you really want to pack an artery, get the surf and turf (Rs 250).

**Tibetan Kitchen** (☎ 2275744, 9326137750; chungdhak@yahoo.co.uk; mains Rs 80-150; ☎ 9am-1pm & 5-10.30pm) Run by a funky bunch of guys who take a great deal of pride in the food and atmosphere on offer, this place has a menu that's eclectic and reasonably priced; the avocado-stuffed prawns (Rs 140) are as earthy and zesty as the atmosphere and the people who create it. Salads are washed in fresh water.

**Royal Foods** (mains Rs 30-100; ☎ 7.30am-10pm) This popular place is a food court that has the efficiency and cleanliness of a fast-food joint, but a more interesting atmosphere and far more interesting food. There is a bakery, a Lebanese barbecue, a juice bar, and a selection of sandwiches and various chicken dishes. The fresh juices (Rs 30) are blended before your eyes, and the other food has an impressively high turnover: the tasty chicken biryani (Rs 35) is churned out at an amazing speed. In fact almost anything with chicken in it could be considered a Royal Foods speciality. The outdoor eating area comes to life on balmy nights when the chefs cook up a storm in the great outdoors.

If you want some respite from the crowds, try the following:

**Café Anand** (☎ 2279616; mains Rs 15-40) Behind the barbershop at the roundabout, this is a popular local choice that is always brimming with patrons.

**Anand** (mains Rs 15-35; ☎ 6am-11pm) Good food and good prices at the roundabout. This local favourite churns out authentic Indian staples; drop in for a dosa (paper-thin lentil-flour pancake) and some chai.

## BAGA

**Lila Café** (☎ 2279843; www.lilacafe.goa.com; mains Rs 60-150; ☎ 9am-6pm) Sitting on the banks of the Baga River, this is one of the most pleasant places to while away time. Local hippies and foreign tourists rub shoulders here; the white curtains and purple cushions are inviting to them all. Delicious pastries are baked in the on-site German bakery. If you're wanting something lighter than the freshly made sweet pastry temptations, try the wholesome muesli with yoghurt and nuts (Rs 60).



**Electric Cats** (☎ 3958156; Santa Vada Baga Beach Rd; mains ₹ 40-120) A good choice for a range of budgets and tastes. Any selection on the multicuisine menu is extremely well prepared and the atmosphere is lovely without being uppity. The bar chairs on the street facing down into the restaurant are a nice touch. The sizzlers are recommended, and whatever else you have, make sure you try the cheese naan. There's another branch in Calangute.

**Sublime** (☎ 3953610; mains ₹ 200-295) On the Baga side of the bridge, Sublime lives up to its name. Run by a creative Indian-English team, Sublime fuses European and more exotic cuisines; its Indian chef has worked in the USA and Germany, and brings his various influences to the menu. Pickings are slim for vegetarians, but the few choices there are won't disappoint. The candlelit laterite atmosphere is also, well, sublime.

**Britto's** (☎ 2277331; Baga Beach; mains ₹ 50-200) A Baga institution that's open from the crack of dawn right through to 3am during peak season, and busy right the way through the day. Britto's popularity is partly due to its lively reputation and partly due to the fact that its menu covers the whole spectrum of options, from Goan curries and pasta to freshly baked pastries and cakes. Cravings at odd hours will be satisfied by alpine chocolate mousse (₹ 60) or perhaps baked beans on toast (₹ 60). Bottles of wine on the extensive wine list go right up ₹ 750.

**Drop Anchor** (☎ 9371005456) This is one of the more permanent shack-style restaurants. It's a pleasant place for some authentic food, and is decorated in the style of an Arabian harem. On its roof – and sometimes all around – is Club Goa.

Other options worth trying in the area:

**J&A's** (☎ 9823139488; H No 560; Baga River; mains ₹ 265-895) On the north side of the Baga River, elegant and upmarket J&A's gets mixed reviews. The seafood platter costs ₹ 895; entertainment nights are hit and miss.

**Kamasutra** (☎ 9890517969, 980517565, 980141879; mains ₹ 60-200; ☎ from 6pm) As the name implies, Kamasutra is trying to make itself a sexy place to be; it has dishes like lusty lobster and tantric tikka in a dimly lit lounge. It sometimes turns into more of a party after 9pm.

**Casa Portuguesa** (☎ 2277024; mains ₹ 60-200; ☎ 7-11pm Tue-Sun) The food gets mixed reviews but the pleasant garden alongside an old colonial villa couldn't be a better place to try *bebinca* (richly layered pancake-like Goan dessert made from egg yolk and coconut).

**39 Steps** (mains ₹ 50-180) Recommended for its laid-back atmosphere and good selection of Indian food. The tandoori chicken (₹ 130) is packed with all the flavour you expect from this old favourite, and the steaks have been recommended. At entrance to Colonia Santa Maria.

**Italic** (☎ 2277672; mains ₹ 80-240) A recently opened chain Italian restaurant. Clean and classy, but not cheap. The classic spaghetti bolognese (which is, admittedly, classic), will set you back ₹ 195.

## Drinking

**Indian Impact** (☎ 2277194) If you're looking for somewhere that's less like a nightclub and more like a lounge bar, this is a pleasant place for a drink.

**OPM Lounge Bar and Restaurant** (beers ₹ 60, spirits ₹ 40; ☎ till late) Has set up the perfect atmosphere for a night out; whether it happens or not can be hit and miss.

**Kamasutra** (cocktails ₹ 80-140) This place is sometimes successful in its bid to change from a family restaurant to a lounge bar after 9pm or so.

## Entertainment

The Calangute-Baga area is something of a base for clubbers these days. Around the festive season, young people from Mumbai and Delhi pour into Calangute to chase the parties. At night, trucks trawl the streets advertising the parties, and the competition passes by playing music even more loudly. The scene changes quickly though: clubs fall in and out of favour, with the newer kids on the block either rising to acclaim or falling by the wayside. And a good party night is hit and miss. It's easy to find out what's happening though; during season you'll barely be able to move for all the leaflets thrust at you as the scene chops, changes, bumps and grinds its way along. The clubs that have proven that they are there to stay are Tito's and Club Cubana.

**Tito's** (☎ 2279895, 2275028; www.titosgoa.com; woman/man/couple ₹ free/300/500) This is the epicentre of nightlife in Calangute. For Indian tourists, Tito's is synonymous with 'party in Goa'. Tito's gets going at dinner time and really cranks up after that, sometimes until around 2am. In addition to its food, it boasts an 'Ibiza-style discotheque'. During the party season entry price skyrockets; single women still pay nothing, but single men pay up to ₹ 800 to gain access to them.

**Mambo's** (☎ 2279895; admission from ₹ 200; ☎ 10pm-4am) Closer towards the beach and attached to Tito's, Mambo's has a less thumping vibe. Over the festive season, the party gets going at 8pm and keeps going in a carnival of international DJs, dancers and holiday giveaways.

**Congo Lounge** (☎ 2276957, 40/7 Saunto Vaddo) A strong rival to Tito's, Congo Lounge has made a clear effort to maintain a degree of class often missing from the Tito's craziness.

**Utopia** (☎ 2282904; www.utopia.goa.com; Holiday St; ☎ from 9pm) In south Calangute, this place is almost at the end of imaginatively named Holiday St. One suspects that its designer has been to Bali a few times; wooden lounge chairs are scattered all the way down to the beach. The whole place is presided over by a golden Buddha, seemingly impervious to the noise going on below. At peak season, the cover charge can be around ₹ 1500.

**On the Rocks** (☎ 3954400, 3954411, 2277878) At the time of research, On the Rocks was working hard to get itself off the ground. This is a restaurant-nightclub with a lounge area at the front and a fully fledged restaurant set back from the road. Time will tell whether it can withstand the competition of its already established neighbour, Tito's.

**Club Cubana** (☎ 9823232910, 9823539000; www.clubcubana.net; woman/man ₹ 500/650; ☎ 9.30pm-5am) This is the most happening place in the area, if not all of Goa. Club Cubana is an open-air multilevel nightclub at the top of Apora Hill, and hence is referred to as the 'nightclub in the sky'. The layout is quite decadent, with tiered balconies, lounge chairs and a swimming pool. Every night has a different theme. Wednesday night is popular because women enter free. The entry fees include unlimited drinks.

**Matrix** (☎ 9890291417, 9850963929; Maizons Lake View Resort) Not nearly as popular as Club Cubana but closer to Baga and Calangute is Matrix, which advertises itself as an 'underwater' nightclub. It's opposite Sun Village.

**Club Westend** (Eiverra; ☎ 5629141; ☎ from 9.30pm) Further out of town and somewhat bumped off the radar by the likes of Club Cubana, this club uses its remote destination as its gimmick, referring to itself as a jungle party. Westend can organise pick-up (it can be tricky to find, particularly at night).

## Shopping

In line with its status as the tourist capital of Goa, Calangute has grown to become the shopping capital. Flashy Western-brand shops such as Lacoste, Levi's, Benetton, Gucci and Nike have sprouted up along the road to Candolim, just south of Calangute's market. Also here are upmarket gold and jewellery shops, boutique fashion stores and arts-and-craft emporiums.

However, it's probably the small-time stalls that will catch the eye of most foreign visitors. Calangute and Baga have been swamped by Kashmiri traders eager to cash in on the tourist boom. There is a fantastic range of things to buy – Kashmiri carpets, embroideries and papier-mâché boxes, as well as genuine and reproduction Tibetan and Rajasthani crafts, bronzes, carvings and miniature paintings. This is all the same sort of stuff you'll see at the Anjuna flea market, so it's worth comparing prices.

There are two permanent but rather makeshift markets along Calangute-Baga road, mostly with wares laid out on blankets. There's a Tibetan handicrafts market between the church and the roundabout in central Calangute, and another handicrafts market in Baga. These markets can be surprisingly hassle-free places to visit, and you can peruse at relative leisure.

**Magic Shop** (Baga Rd) For kids (and the young at heart) this is an absorbing place. It sells all sorts of tricks, props and illusions, and the owner promises to teach you magic in three minutes.

**Sangolda** (☎ 2409310; sangolda@sancharnet.in; Sangolda-Saligao; ☎ 10.15am-7pm Mon-Sat) One of the greatest shopping excursions you can make is a trip out to Sangolda. Set in an old colonial building, this is worth the trip not only for the resplendent items on sale, but also for the architecture and the drive inland to the town of Sangolda. Everything you see is for sale, and there couldn't be a more picturesque and inspiring place to enjoy a cup of coffee. It's opposite Mae de Deus Chapel in the town of Sangolda.

**Saudades** (Sangolda-Saligao) Sangolda's neighbour specialises in 'colonial furniture and ethnic artefacts' and is also worth a visit.

## Getting There & Away

Most buses start or end at the market in Calangute, although a few go on to Baga.

Buses leave for Calangute from the Kadamba bus station in Panaji when they're full (Rs 10, 40 minutes, every 10 to 15 minutes). An autorickshaw from Panaji to Calangute will cost around Rs 150, and a taxi costs Rs 150 to 200 and takes about 30 minutes. There are frequent buses to Mapusa (Rs 7); a motorcycle taxi to Mapusa costs Rs 50, a taxi Rs 100.

A taxi to Anjuna will cost around Rs 200. Taxis charge around Rs 200 to go to Ingo's Saturday Nite Bazaar or Club Cubana.

**Paulo Tours & Travels** (☎ 2281274; Golden Beach Rd) has a small office near the beach. It is the main operator for private buses to Hampi, Mumbai and Bangalore; pick-up is available in Calangute.

### Getting Around

Motorcycle and moped hire is easy to arrange in Calangute, and if you're here outside the peak season, you should be able to bargain a reasonable price. Try to pay around Rs 100 a day for a Honda Kinetic if you hire it for a week or more, though you're doing well if you manage to get one for Rs 150. Expect to pay Rs 250 a day around Christmas. Ask around near the steps to the beach in central Calangute, near the roundabout or at the market area where taxis hang out. Up in Baga, taxis congregate towards the end of the road near Britto's.

Take particular care riding on the Calangute-Baga road and near the market area, which gets congested with buses and taxis. The sandy area leading to the covered

bridge at Baga is another place where many inexperienced riders come to grief.

Bicycles can also be hired (around Rs 40 per day) in the market area – there are no shops as such, just ask around and look for signs.

### MAPUSA

☎ 0832 / pop 40,100

Mapusa (*map-sa*) is the largest town in north Goa. There's not much to see or do, but it's a nice bustling break from the beaches and a good base for supplies and errands. It's also small enough for you to jump off the bus and get pretty much anywhere you need to go on foot. If you're driving in, be attentive to one-way streets.

### Information

Phone calls can be made and faxes can be sent from any of the numerous private phone offices around town.

**Bank of India ATM** (☎ 24hr) At the north end of the Municipal Gardens.

**Corporate Bank ATM** (☎ 24hr) Immediately next door to Pink Pantha.

**Directorate of Tourism** (☎ 2262390) For a slightly more technical slant than the GTDC; immediately next door to Mapusa Residency.

**ICICI Bank ATM** (☎ 24hr) Down the lane opposite the police station off the Mapusa-Anjuna road.

**Mapusa Clinic** (☎ 2263343, 2263346; Mapusa Clinic Rd; ☎ 24hr) A well-run medical facility with a small fleet of ambulances.

**Mapusa Residency** (☎ 2262794, 2262694) Head to this GTDC-run hotel (opposite) for tourist information.

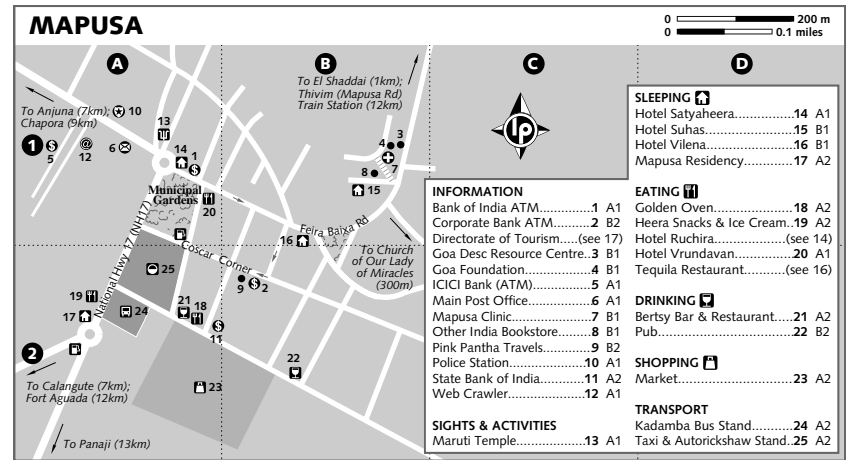
### GETTING INVOLVED: GOA'S SERIOUS SIDE

Mapusa is a good base if you're after information about the wider issues of Goa; there are several NGOs based here that are chipping away at the economic, social and environmental issues that affect the state.

The **Goa Desc Resource Centre** (☎ 0832-2252660; www.goadesc.org; 11 Liberty Apt, Feira Alta) is a local lobby group that works on human-rights issues including women's rights and tourism development. Their latest project is Goa Can, a consumer-rights initiative for which they are requesting that travellers provide feedback on consumer issues that affect them. The Goa Desc Resource Centre has an interesting collection of resources that you can ask to access.

Goa's leading conservation and environment group, the prolific **Goa Foundation** (☎ 0832-2256479; www.goacom.com/goafoundation; G/8 St Britto's Apt, Feira Alta), is accessed from Mapusa Clinic Rd. This is the place to go if you're wanting to find out more about Goa's environmental problems, how you can minimise your contribution to them or how to become a volunteer. You can also make enquiries at the **Other India Bookstore** (☎ 2263306; www.otherindiabookstore.com; Mapusa Clinic Rd), which stocks many Goa Foundation publications.

For more information about the work of El Shaddai in helping Goa's children, see p138.



**Other India Bookstore** (☎ 2263306; www.otherindiabookstore.com; Mapusa Clinic Rd) Hailed as the best bookshop in Mapusa, it has a solid collection of nonfiction, including many publications of the Goa Foundation. The collection is well-organised and there is a strong focus on social and environmental issues in Goa.

**Pink Pantha Travels** (☎ 250352, 252816; fax 263180) This busy agent is reliable for currency exchange and credit-card cash advances.

**State Bank of India** Will exchange cash and travellers checks.

**Web Crawler** (per hr Rs 20) One of several cheap Internet cafes; down a lane opposite the police station.

### Sights & Activities

Founded in 1594 and rebuilt several times since, **Church of Our Lady of Miracles** (St Jerome's) is famous more for its annual festival than for its architecture. It was built by the Portuguese on the site of an old Hindu temple, which the Hindu community still holds sacred. Thus on the 16th day after Easter, the church's annual feast day is celebrated here by both Hindus and Christians – one of the best examples of the way in which Hinduism and Christianity coexist in Goa.

The small but attractive **Maruti temple** was built in the 1840s at a site where the monkey god Hanuman was covertly worshipped. After temples had been destroyed by the Portuguese, Rama devotees placed a picture of Hanuman at the fireworks shop that once stood here. In April 1843, the picture was replaced by a silver idol and an increasing number of worshippers began to gather

here. Eventually, the business community of Mapusa gathered enough funds to acquire the shop, and the temple was built in its place. The intricate carvings at the doorway of the temple are the work of local artisans.

The **Mapusa market** (☎ 8am-6.30pm) really gets going on Friday. It's a raucous affair that attracts vendors and shoppers from all over Goa (and interstate) with an entirely different vibe to the Anjuna market; here you'll find locals haggling for clothing and produce, and you can also find antiques, souvenirs and textiles.

### Sleeping

There are several places to stay in Mapusa, though none are particularly special. Given the better choices on offer at nearby beach towns there's little reason to stay, but if you are in transit or need respite from the coast, the following options should do the trick.

**Hotel Satyaheera** (☎ 2262849, 2262949, 2263379; satya\_goa@sancharnet.in; d with/without AC Rs 850/590; ☎) Hotel Satyaheera has the range of facilities befitting a midrange hotel, but with the quaint attitude of a place that prides itself on being the best hotel in town. It certainly lives up to that title as far as its location goes.

**Mapusa Residency** (☎ 2262794, 2262694; d with/without AC Rs 750/540, ste Rs 1050; ☎) Service is indifferent and rooms are in the bland but functional mould you expect from GTDC accommodation. Over the peak season, this is a good option.

**Hotel Vilena** (☎ 2263115, 2256649; vito@sancharnet.in; Feira Baixa Rd; d with/without bathroom Rs 500/400, tr Rs 650) A good budget option run by an endearing married couple who are very traveller friendly.

**Hotel Suhas** (☎ 2263115; dm Rs 70, s/d with bathroom Rs 99/150) A bit grimy and disorganised, but it's as budget as they come. It's off Feira Baixa Rd.

### Eating & Drinking

For cheap street eats and rich street atmosphere, head for the area around the private bus stands. Things get going at around dusk.

**Hotel Vrundavan** (☎ 2253879; mains Rs 10-30) A great place with authentically local food and authentically local people. You just might be the only non-Indian in the restaurant, which makes for a pleasant change if you're in town for a break from the beaches. It's near the Municipal Gardens.

**Heera Snacks & Ice Cream** (☎ 8am-noon & 4pm-midnight) A decent place for a quick drink or ice cream in a pleasant sort of garden. Located at the roundabout, it's a stone's throw from the station but a world away in atmosphere.

**Pub** (☎ 2262657; mains Rs 30-130; ☎ 10am-9pm Mon-Sat) This is a small Austrian-run place with a balcony where you can enjoy a beer or a pasta and watch the busy street below.

**Bertsy Bar & Restaurant** (☎ 9am-11pm) Perfect for a quiet drink and some privacy while you're waiting for a bus. Bertsy's is a rela-

tively spacious hole in the wall that offers a chance to get away from the city fumes. Its tinted door doesn't look too inviting but it's surprisingly wholesome on the inside. Look for the red-brick entrance.

**Tequila Restaurant** (☎ 2263115, 2256649; Hotel Vilena) This is a low-key rooftop restaurant serving Goan and other Indian dishes.

**Hotel Ruchira** (☎ 2263869; 5th fl, Hotel Satyaheera) For a classier feed go to Ruchira, which Mapusa locals (but few others) consider fine dining.

**Golden Oven** (☎ 9am-6.30pm) For some clean and shiny comfort, duck into this bakery, which is a civilised respite from the chaos of the bus stand.

### Getting There & Away

Mapusa is the jumping-off point for the northern beaches of Goa. There are private operators selling tickets near the Kadamba bus station for buses to Mumbai (normal/air-conditioned Rs 300/700, 14 hours) and Bangalore (normal/air-conditioned Rs 500/700, 12 hours). There are also state-run buses to Pune (Rs 54, 15 hours) and Belgaum (Rs 57, five hours).

Every 20 to 30 minutes local express buses leave for Panaji (Rs 7, 25 minutes), Calangute (Rs 7, 20 minutes) and Anjuna (Rs 7, 20 minutes). Other buses go to Chapora, Candolim and Arambol (Rs 12, 20 minutes).

A motorcycle taxi to Anjuna or Calangute should cost around Rs 50, an autorickshaw Rs 70 and a taxi around Rs 100.

Thivim, about 12km northeast of town, is the nearest train station on the Konkan Railway. Local buses for Mapusa (Rs 5, 25 minutes) meet the trains; an autorickshaw costs around Rs 80.

## ANJUNA

☎ 0832

Famous throughout Goa for its Wednesday flea market, Anjuna has long held the mantle of Goa's favourite 'hippy beach'. Unlike Calangute, Anjuna has retained some of its charm.

There's a weird and wonderful collection of defiant ex-hippies, overlanders, monks, gentle lunatics, artists, artisans, seers, searchers and itinerant expatriates who have wandered far from the organic confines of health-food emporia in San Francisco and London. They've been joined by hard-core partygoers, who are a mix of macho Israelis just released from military service and European ravers on charter flights, all drawn by the area's reputation for trance parties.

The beach itself – at the southern end at least is one of the most alluring in north Goa, and since it's not easily accessible from the village, it's rarely crowded.

### Orientation

Anjuna is quite spread out and much of the land behind the beach is still farmland. There are three distinct areas: the main crossroads and bus stand where paths lead down to the beach; the back part of the village, where you'll find the post office, convenience stores and some travel agents; and the flea market area, a couple of kilometres to the south, which also marks the southern end of the beach.

### Information

#### BOOKSHOPS

There are various second-hand bookshops scattered around; most are attached to restaurants or hotels.

**Manali Guest House** (☎ 2274421, 2273477) There's a small second-hand bookshop downstairs, and upstairs a collection of new books next to the Internet café.

#### INTERNET ACCESS

Most Internet cafés charge between Rs 40 to Rs 50 for an hour. If you need to use the Internet for an extended period, it may be worth going to a smaller town where they

charge half the price. Apart from the following, try the area at the coast where the road ends.

**Connexions Travel** (☎ 2274347, 2274439; fax 2274347, connexion23@rediffmail.com; Internet access per hr Rs 50) Next to Paradise Guest House.

**German Bakery** (☎ 8.30am-11pm) Has now set up a wireless Internet facility for laptop users.

**Manali Guest House** (☎ 2274421, 2273477; per hr Rs 40) The most pristine Internet café, and the one with the most computers.

**Nehal Travels** (☎ 2273288, 2273309, 2273475; nehalthravels@rediffmail.com) A couple of computers with good Internet speed (per hr Rs 40). Also a decent place to recharge your phone card.

**Nikhil Travels** (☎ 2274508; Internet access per hr Rs 40; ☎ 9am-9pm) Internet access.

### MONEY

Travel agencies will change cash and travellers cheques, and give cash advances on Visa and MasterCard. Most are also open longer than banks.

There are no ATMs in Anjuna; the closest are in Mapusa or Calangute.

**Bank of Baroda** (Anjuna Beach Rd; ☎ 9.30am-2.30pm Mon-Wed & Fri, 9.30am-noon Sat) Gives cash advances on Visa and MasterCard. There's also a 'safe custody' facility for your valuables, but the safe at your hotel will be cheaper. Here, you have to pay Rs 170 any time you want to access your property.

**Villa Anjuna** (☎ 2273443, www.anjunavilla.com; Anjuna Beach Rd) If you need to get cash out of a machine, this hotel has facilities but will charge for the service.

### POST

You can have your mail sent poste restante to the Anjuna post office.

### TRAVEL AGENCIES

There are numerous travel agencies that can make onward travel bookings, get flights confirmed and change foreign currency, including the following:

**Connexions Travels** (☎ 2274437, 2274439; connexion23@rediffmail.com) Next to Paradise Guest House.

**Kwick Travels** (☎ 2273477) At the Manali Guest House.

**MGM Travels** (☎ 2274317) On the main road.

**Speedy Travels** (☎ 2273208; Mazal Vaddo) Next to the post office.

### Dangers & Annoyances

Anjuna is well known as a place to procure drugs (although it doesn't have a monopoly

### HOMES FOR KIDS

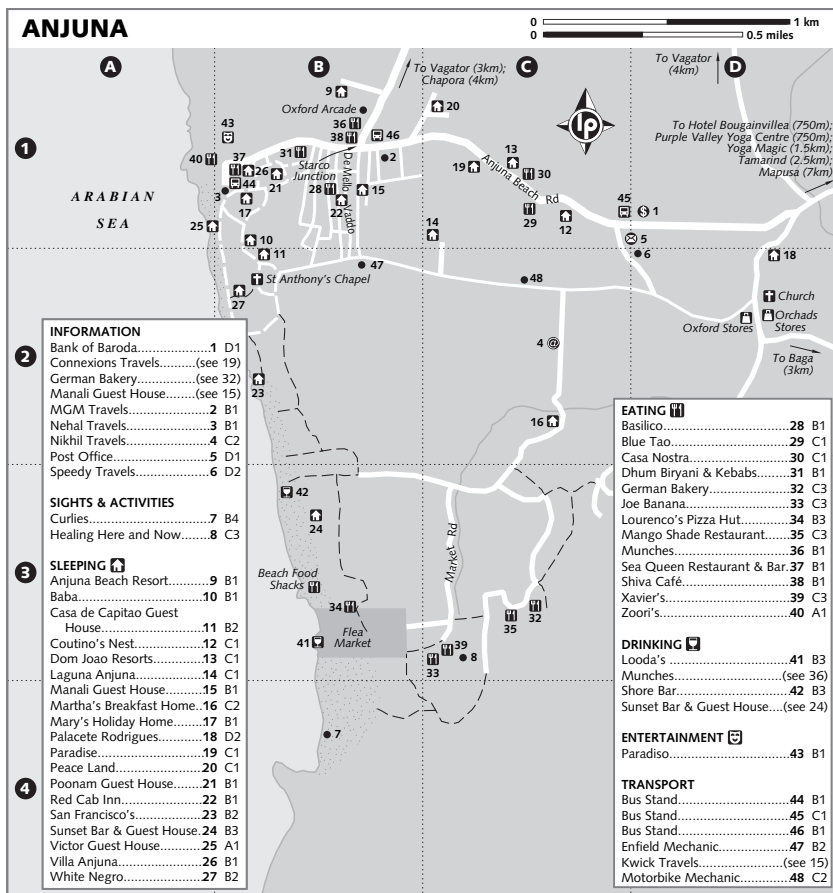
While you're lounging around on Goa's beaches, it's easy to forget that the state shares most of India's social problems.

**El Shaddai** (☎ 0832-2266520, 5613286/7; www.childrescue.net; El Shaddai House, Duler, Mapusa) works to get Goa's homeless children off the streets and into schools, and has made an enormous contribution to that end.

El Shaddai was founded by Anita Edgar and Matthew Kurian. Anita is an Englishwoman who was shocked by the child poverty during a trip to Goa in 1996. With local community help and the support of visitors to Goa, it has established five children's homes, three night shelters and day care units and a nonformal school and vocational training college. The Vidya Niketan Vocational Training College was opened in November 2005. El Shaddai also has feeding programmes in Mapusa, Margao and Vasco da Gama.

You can visit the homes and meet the children. Shekinah House and Victory House are boys' homes in Assagao and Saligao. Rainbow House is a home for girls. Asha Deep and Stepping Stones are night shelters in Panaji and Margao. There is also a house in Calangute called Little Acorns.

If you are interested in volunteering your time to meet the kids, or would like offer sponsorship support, contact El Shaddai's head office in Mapusa, opposite the football grounds.



on them). Illicit substances, though not so freely available these days, can still be found here, but participate at your peril – the police Anti-Narcotics Cell has been known to carry out checks on foreigners.

Take great care of your possessions in Anjuna; theft can be a problem, especially on market day and party nights.

## Activities

Anjuna is a place to hang out, meet people over a few drinks, watch the sunset and go to the occasional party – if the police don't beat you there. Apart from market day there's no real reason to day trip here since there's nothing to see except the 'scene' itself.

The extremely popular **Purple Valley Yoga Centre** (☎ 9370568639; www.yogagoa.com) is a great place to attend regular sessions. The centre offers classes in the full range of yoga styles and attracts teachers from around the world. There are 8am classes, suitable for all levels, on every day except Sunday. At 9.30am on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays there are special classes for beginners. It costs around Rs 400 for a single class, or Rs 3000 for 10. Check the website for the latest information. If you really want to immerse yourself in the yoga culture, you can stay on site at Hotel Bougainvillea (p142). Upmarket accommodation option Yoga Magic (p142) offers yoga and massage.

**Healing Here & Now** (☎ 32273487; www.healinghereandnow.com; St Michael's Vaddo), tucked behind Xavier's restaurant, is a peaceful place with lots of different yoga classes (including classes for children and pregnant women). It also offers several other healing treatments, such as colonic cleansing, naturopathy and foot reflexology.

If you are interested in paragliding, go to Curlies (p144) on southern Anjuna Beach (behind the flea market), where a colourful collection of adrenaline junkies congregate to escape their European winters. The jumps usually start from the top of the hill just behind Curlies or sometimes further north in Vagator, depending on the wind. Either way, Curlies is the place to start. Tandem glides cost Rs 1300.

Even if you're not planning on gliding, the view of the coast from the cross at the top of this hill is spectacular, and well worth the very easy walk up there from the beach.

## Sleeping BUDGET

**Manali Guest House** (☎ 2274421, 2273477; d without bathroom Rs 100-200) This guesthouse is everything a budget hotel should be; rooms are

basic no-fuss budget jobs, there are motorcycles to rent, a money exchange service, backpackers hanging around the small restaurant, an Internet café and bookshop upstairs – clean, basic, home.

**Red Cab Inn** (☎ 274427; redcabinn@rediffmail.com; H No 893/1 De Mello Vaddo; r/stc Rs 500/600) This is efficiently run by a delightful couple. The one and only honeymoon suite is a bargain, and it has studded blue lights on the ceiling in an attempt to create a starry night sky. The atmosphere is charming, peaceful and red, and its location just back from the road gives it a secluded though central feel.

**Peace Land** (☎ 2273700, 9822685255; s/d Rs 300/500) This is a real find: a chilled-out place away from the main road. Rooms are immaculate, and open out onto a nice common space with well-placed hammocks. There's also a tiny restaurant.

**Paradise** (☎ 2274347, 2274439; janet965@hotmail.com; St Michael's Vaddo; r Rs 350-400) This quirky house full of cats is kept neat and orderly by the lovely Janet. Rooms have hot water and a bathroom; some have a fridge.

Other homely and economic places: **Martha's Breakfast Home** (☎ 2273365, 2274194; mpd8650@hotmail.com; H No 907, Monteiro Vaddo) As homely as the name implies.

## THE ANJUNA MARKET EXPERIENCE

'Anjuna Beach in Goa is an anthropologist's dream,' said Gita Mehta in the book *Karma Cola*, and that's as true today as when she wrote it back in the still psychedelic 1970s.

The Wednesday flea market is a major attraction for everyone visiting Goa. Tibetan and Kashmiri traders, colourful Gujarati tribal women, blissed-out 21st-century hippies, Indian tourists, businesspeople, Western package tourists and travellers from around the world pour into Anjuna on motorcycles, buses and boats.

The market had humble beginnings, and was originally started by long-term Western residents who needed to sell a few belongings so they could afford some more time at this seaside paradise. From time to time the authorities closed the market down, mostly when the number of bottles of Scotch, Marlboro cigarettes or electronic devices indicated that this was becoming less of a flea market and more of a black market.

Western residents would make cakes and cookies to sell here (they still do today, and chocolate chips are not the only ingredients) and it soon became the highlight of the week, the place to catch up on the gossip, make a little money or just hang out. Westerners still trade goods and services (piercing, tattoos and haircuts), but the market has now developed into a souvenir bazaar.

Whatever you need, from a paperback to a second-hand Enfield motorcycle, rave clothing, hammocks, henna or spices; it's all here. This is the best place to browse for souvenirs or, if you're not interested in shopping, get comfortable under a tree with a beer or cappuccino and enjoy the show.

The best time to visit is early morning (it starts around 8am) or late afternoon (from about 4pm); the latter is good if you plan to stay on for the sunset and party at the Shore Bar (p144) or some live music at Looda's (p144).

**Coutinho's Nest** (☎ 2274386, 2273389; www.travelin.goa.com/Coutinhosnest; r Rs 150-400) Rooms with a range of facilities in a family home.

**Sunset Bar & Guest House** (☎ 2273917; r with/without bathroom Rs 500/250) Down on the beach, Sunset Bar has basic rooms in a good location for both market and beach access. It's well placed to keep you in the know if beach parties happen.

**Baba** (☎ 2273847; r small Rs 350-400, larger Rs 700-800) Only the larger rooms have hot water.

## MIDRANGE

**Palacete Rodrigues** (☎ 273358, 250291; www.palacete.rodrigues.com; Mazal Vaddo; s/d without AC Rs 850/950, d with AC Rs 1050; 🏠) Somewhere between a heritage museum and a bric-a-brac store, Palacete Rodrigues and the friendly family who runs it extend a warm welcome and are sure to secure a place in your memory. There are 15 rooms in this 200-year-old Portuguese mansion, each with its own individual style and elements of quirkiness. It is close to the everything that makes Anjuna famous, but worlds away in atmosphere.

**Hotel Bougainvillea** (Grandpa's Inn; ☎ 2273270; fax 2274370; Gaunwadi; r Rs 1200-2700; 🏠) This pleasant colonial building, which is more than 200 years old, has a lovely restaurant on its veranda. There's a pool table and the place is full of character and characters. It shares a garden with the Purple Valley Yoga Centre.

**Casa De Capitao Guest House** (☎ 2273832; apt Rs 700) Long-term stayers should consider Casa De Capitao Guest House, located just behind the church, which has very nicely furnished apartments with small and inviting balconies.

**Villa Anjuna** (☎ 2273443, www.anjunavilla.com; Anjuna Beach Rd; d Rs 750-1000; 🏠) Villa Anjuna is well located and well endowed with facilities such as a 24-hour café and a small but clean pool. There are also good facilities with regard to Internet, safe lockers etc. Rooms around the pool have far more of villa feel than the ones out the back, which seem overpriced.

**Anjuna Beach Resort** (☎ 2274499, 227443; fabjoe@sancharnet.in; r Rs 600-800) Rooms that have hot water and private balconies are lovely; those that don't are devoid of character. On the whole, this is a safe and friendly place to stay, and it can be sociable.

**Victor Guest House** (☎ 9822176982; r Rs 1000) Perched on top of the cliff, Victor has the

best views around. Rooms 1 and 2 are the ones to go for; they preside over an endless view south down the coast.

Other popular options:

**White Negro** (☎ 2273326; r basic/standard Rs 300/500) Standard rooms with TV and hot water are neat, tidy and good value. The garden restaurant gets good reviews.

**Poonam Guesthouse** (☎ 2274394, 2273194; poon.amghr@yahoo.co.in; d from Rs 600) A good central budget option with several rooms for a range of prices. Those with their own veranda are the best.

**Dom Joao Resorts** (☎ 2274325; donjoaoanjuna@yahoo.co.in; d Rs 600-1200; 🏠) The only place in Anjuna built higher than two storeys. Apartment-style rooms have a fridge, a lounge area and a balcony. There is also a small pool.

## TOP END

**Yoga Magic** (☎ 5623796; www.yogamagic.net; tent/lodge/ste £179/199/219) A truly special experience is on offer at Yoga Magic, located in the middle of the sprawling Goan countryside. Accommodation is in spacious Rajasthani style tents with private open-air hot-water showers and ecotoilets. Guests do yoga in the morning on their verandas, then head to the laid-back restaurant for a healthy meal. Everyone is waiting to see how the pool pans out.

**Laguna Anjuna** (☎ 2274305, 2273248, 227413, 274132; www.lagunaanjuna.com; 1-/2-bedroom ste Rs 3600/5500; 🏠) Laguna Anjuna has a nice set up; the dense green gardens are scattered with beach lounges and hammocks, and there's a reasonably sized pool. There is a shady restaurant in the dim main building, which is classic colonial and a fitting place for a game of pool. The rooms all vary, but some really hit the mark for boutique style.

**Tamarind** (☎ 2274319; www.thetamarind.com; r Rs 1400-2200; 🏠) A couple of kilometres out of Anjuna on the Mapusa-Anjuna Rd, the Tamarind has 22 rooms in a lovely setting. The restaurant is set on the veranda of an old colonial building, but the building containing the rooms are of Tuscan-style stone overlooking the pool. There's also minigolf. Rooms have no TV, but there is a communal TV room. Children aged under 12 are not permitted to stay here.

## Eating

There is a handful of beach shacks concentrated along the strip near the flea market. There are also a few restaurants overlooking

the beach and some lining the main road. The more interesting places to eat are hidden in the village. The local foreigners shop for groceries at Oxford Stores and Orchard Stores, opposite each other in the village, and at Oxford Arcade, near the junction. The latter has everything from fresh bread to international imports like Heinz baked beans, Colgate toothpaste and Vegemite for homesick Aussies.

**German Bakery** (mains Rs 40-130; ☎ 8.30am-11pm) Recollections of the German Bakery will stir in your memory long after you've left Goa. Tripped-out trees form the walls and ambient music fills the air. Local expats pick a cushion and spend hours catching up with friends. The menu is consistently good, and you can justify indulging in the decadent fried apple pancake (Rs 45) on the basis that it's fruit based. The spaghetti Napolitana (Rs 90) is a wholesome indulgence too. Whatever you order has to be washed down with a concoction from the juice bar – try the fresh and minty sea breeze (Rs 30). And there's real coffee. Restaurants all over Goa incorporate 'German Bakery' into their names, trying to ride the coat-tails of this one. This is *the* German Bakery.

**Zoori's** (☎ 2273476; hornykarma@hotmail.com; H No 652, St Anthony Praise; mains Rs 40-160) A must-do in Anjuna. There are multiple levels of seating at this cliffside eatery, with cushions and lounge chairs overlooking the ocean. There's an eclectic mix of food, from pastas and Mexican fare to chicken schnitzel (Rs 165), as well as good vegetarian (Rs 130) and nonvegetarian breakfasts (Rs 140) and a range of coffee – but really the food isn't so important when there's a view like this.

**Mango Shade Restaurant** (mains Rs 15-50; ☎ 8am-4pm) This is a laid-back and extremely cheap place to eat, with as much character as value. There's real expertise in breakfast foods, though people hang out here all day. The Israeli salad (Rs 25) is a quick and fresh tomato-and-cucumber combination catering to the clientele. Unfortunately the size of the apple-cinnamon pancake (Rs 30) is not in proportion to its flavour; order a second one and wash it down with a thick Turkish coffee or cappuccino (Rs 25). If you're indecisive, go old school and get a burger (Rs 40).

**Blue Tao** (☎ 2273977, 9850419782; martaceriani@yahoo.com; mains Rs 80-130; ☎ 8.30am-11pm) One of the leaders in the healthy-lifestyle cul-

ture of Anjuna, Blue Tao sells a range of natural products and has a lovely courtyard. The menu is a creative collection of Indian and Italian dishes, all of which are organic and vegetarian. Rare treats such as pesto-embellished pasta are available here, along with exotic juice drinks with a healthy twist.

**Joe Banana** (dishes Rs 10-80; ☎ 8am-6pm) This spot is a favourite among local foreigners for its clean fresh food and low prices. The vegetable thali (traditional all-you-can-eat meal; Rs 50); pumpkin *bhajia* (pumpkin fritter; Rs 10) and blueberry juice (Rs 50) are all good. It's diagonally behind Xavier's restaurant. Ask for directions.

**Sea Queen Restaurant & Bar** (Anjuna Beach Rd; mains Rs 25-110) There is a range of Italian, Indian and Israeli food here, none of which is spectacular, but the restaurant plays two movies every night. Sea Queen is next to Villa Anjuna.

**Xavier's** (mains Rs 80-350; ☎ from 7pm) This place comfortably has the status of best seafood restaurant in town. It prepares prawns, lobster and whatever fish is available in creative though distinctly Goan style. It is nicely located behind the flea market area.

Other established eateries in the area: **Casa Nostra** (mains Rs 80-150; ☎ 7-11pm) Diagonally opposite Blue Tao, this Italian restaurant serves pizza and pasta.

**Munches** (mains Rs 25-80; ☎ 24hr) Popular for juice or snacks, or when the munchies hit.

**Lourenco's Pizza Hut** (pizza Rs 100-140) A popular lunch venue, particularly on market days given its location. It serves wood-fire pizzas.

**Basilico** (☎ 2273721; mains Rs 80-130) An Italian restaurant with a nicely enclosed eating area.

**San Francisco's** (☎ 5611264; pasta Rs 80) A friendly place to watch the sea and have Indian or Italian food.

**Shiva Café** (☎ 2270586; mains Rs 60-100) At the intersection on the 1st floor, the mostly Indian menu is a bit light on the spice but offers a good range.

**Dhum Biryani & Kebabs** (☎ 9326124699; Biryani Palace, Anjuna Beach Rd; mains Rs 50-150) Loved by visitors and locals alike. Turns out fantastically tasty kebabs.

## Drinking & Entertainment

The Starco Junction also manages to keep a flicker of a pulse going when everything else is dead; if you're intent on keeping on at it, you'll be able to procure a beer somewhere at this corner; try Munches (above).

Anjuna Beach Rd hits the coast and peters down into a series of stall-lined dirt

paths. You'll be approached here by hangers around offering ganja and pills; they're a good source of information as to when and where the next party will be. On market days, party invites are handed out. The nearby restaurants do good business on Wednesday nights as weary shoppers wander towards the beach for a drink.

**Looda's** (Anjuna flea market; mains Rs 40-100) At the time of research this was the place to go on Wednesday; when the market winds down, live bands play against the spectacular backdrop of the ocean. A good night at Looda's can be one of your most memorable nights in Goa.

**Shore Bar** (Anjuna Beach; ☎ till late on market days) This used to be the centre of action, but now is just one of many beachside restaurants that compete for the crowds with music, atmosphere and seafood menus.

**Sunset Bar** (☎ 2273917) It's difficult to distinguish or single out options along the dense strip of restaurants and watering holes along the beach. Sunset Bar does a good enough job to be an example of the kinds of places you'll find: somewhere you can spend a day making orders from the varied menu, and then switch drinks' list after sunset.

**Curlies** (South Anjuna Beach; mains Rs 40-100; ☎ till late) Curlies is one of those special places where no-one fits but everyone does, and where something always seems to be going on even though nothing much is actually happening. One suspects that the rocks between Curlies and the rest of Anjuna are actually the dividing line between Curlies and the rest of the world. The collection of people who are magnetically drawn back each season from lives one can only speculate about are an earthy blend of folk; their chilling out is an experience to take part in or just observe.

**Paradiso** (☎ 9326100013) The party scene in Anjuna is a transient one but Paradiso is always on, though it doesn't really get started until midnight. In the wee hours of the morning you will see people stumbling home legless – and sometimes shoeless. Paradiso boasts clay sculptures, a surreally displaced chai market, and even a Coffee Day Express.

### Getting There & Away

There are buses every hour or so from Mapusa to Anjuna (Rs 7). They park at

the end of the road to the beach and continue on to Vagator and Chapora; some go up to Arambol. You can also hail down a Mapusa-bound bus at the Starco Junction, or further east along the road just before the Bank of Baroda.

Plenty of motorcycle taxis gather at the Starco Junction, and you can also hire scooters and motorcycles easily at this intersection. There's an Enfield mechanic and a normal motorcycle mechanic, the latter tending to the scooters often used by the Anjuna crowd.

## VAGATOR & CHAPORA

☎ 0832

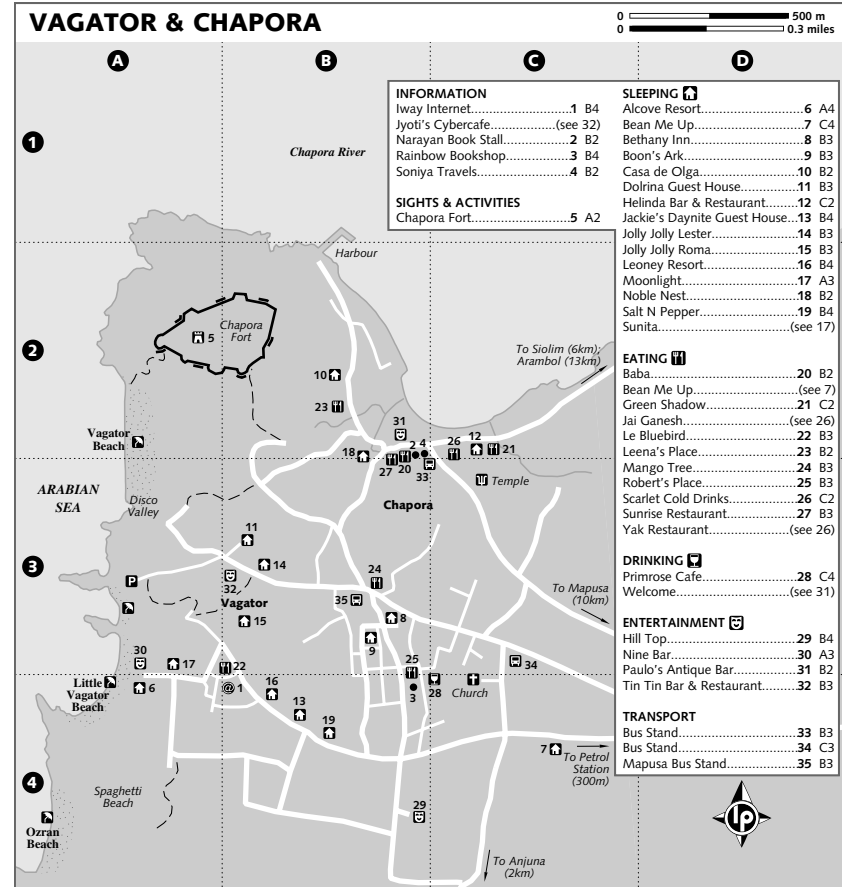
This is one of the most rugged and interesting parts of north Goa's coastline and it's the place to be if you're seeking Goa's infamous party scene. Much of the inhabited area nestles under a canopy of dense coconut palms, and the little fishing village of Chapora is dominated by a rocky hill topped by an old Portuguese fort. The views from the ramparts of the fort are superb.

Rather than the long, open stretch of sand found on most of Goa's developed coastline, secluded coves dominate the northern side of this rocky outcrop. Although Vagator is not a particularly crowded beach, it's popular with day-trippers from Calangute and is a major stop on the bus tours of north Goa, so for a few hours each day the parts of the beach closest to the bus stop are flooded with interlopers. There are three main beaches: Vagator (the largest), Little Vagator and Ozran. There is a Shiva face carved into the rocks at Little Vagator Beach, which features in posters and postcards.

Many Westerners stay here on a long-term basis during the winter season, but it's not a tourist ghetto. The local people remain amenable and it's much more laid-back than even Anjuna – particularly Chapora, which is little more than a narrow main street and a string of village homes between the harbour and Siolim. Vagator is where the night-time action happens; there are some regular party venues here.

### Information

The nearest banks are in Anjuna or Mapusa, but many shops and travel agencies offer money exchange. On Chapora's narrow



main street there are several STD/ISD booths, as well as two small bookstalls and a store for provisions.

**Bethany Inn** (Vagator; per hr Rs 40)

**Iway Internet** (per hr Rs 40) Tucked in the tightly backed bend in the road.

**Jyoti's Cybercafe** (per hr Rs 50) Formerly Eddie's.

**Narayan Book Stall** (☎ 9326137063) Small stall for book purchase and exchange.

**Noble Nest Travels** (☎ 2274335) Plane, bus, boat and train ticketing, and has an Internet café. It's near the chapel.

**Rainbow Bookshop** (☎ 273715) Bookshop and exchange, plus Internet and phone calls; opposite Primrose Cafe.

**Soniya Travels** (☎ 2273344) Transport bookings, foreign exchange and Internet access.

### Sights & Activities

#### CHAPORA FORT

Though Bardez taluka (district) ceded to the Portuguese in 1543, the security of the territory continued to be a major headache for many years. The lands were threatened by several enemies – the Muslims from the north, Maratha horsemen from the east and the local chieftains in the area itself.

As a result, the Portuguese set about building a series of fortifications between the mid-16th and early 17th centuries. Chapora fort, on the very northern edge of the new territory, was constructed in about 1617 – only five years after work began on Fort Aguada. Whereas Aguada was never taken by force, Chapora fell twice. The first time,

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Alcove Resort.....	6 A4
Bean Me Up.....	7 C4
Bethany Inn.....	8 B3
Boon's Ark.....	9 B3
Casa de Olga.....	10 B2
Dolrina Guest House.....	11 B3
Helinda Bar & Restaurant.....	12 C2
Jackie's Daynite Guest House.....	13 B4
Jolly Jolly Lester.....	14 B3
Jolly Jolly Roma.....	15 B3
Leoney Resort.....	16 B4
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it was reportedly taken without a shot being fired, when the captain of the fort decided to surrender to the Maratha forces of the Hindu leader Sambhaji in 1684.

The Portuguese rebuilt the fort in 1717, adding features such as tunnels that led from the bastion down to the seashore and the river bank to enable resupply or escape in times of trouble. The fort fell again to the Marathas in 1739. But when the northern taluka of Pernem came into Portuguese hands the significance of Chapora faded, and the fort was eventually abandoned in the 1890s.

### CHAPORA HARBOUR

Taking the road to the northwest of the village brings you to the small harbour, an area of pungent smells where colourful fishing boats bob idly and the day's catch is hauled in each morning and evening. The mouth of the Chapora River is a good spot for photographs and you can buy fish and seafood directly from the boats.

### YOGA & AYURVEDA

Keep your eye out for various yoga classes. In addition to the very popular courses in Anjuna (p140), there are yoga courses offered at Bean Me Up (below).

There are so many Ayurvedic centres in the area, it is difficult to recommend one. Ask around for recommendations, or try the Ayurvedic treatments available at Bean Me Up and out the back of the German Bakery in Anjuna.

### Sleeping VAGATOR

**Bean Me Up** (☎ 2273479; beanmeup@usa.net; H No 1639/2 Deul Vaddo; d with/without bathroom Rs 550/350) This is a very special place of extraordinary good value. Rooms are set around the courtyard restaurant, with a toy-filled kid's corner and an adult-oriented chill-out corner. Every room is immaculate, and those with tiled hot-water bathrooms have small elements of style (like coordinated wall-hangings and decorative mosquito nets over big beds) to give them a slightly indulgent feeling. All of them are winners. The restaurant here is very popular and hosts the occasional live music event.

**Alcove Resort** (☎ 2274491, 2273349; alcove2002@rediffmail.com; r with/without AC Rs 2000/2500; 🍷 🍷)

For location and facilities, this is one of the nicer places to stay in Vagator, for its location and facilities, is Alcove, the highlight of which is the view the restaurant terrace offers over the ocean. Nonguests can pay Rs 100 to use the pool. It won't suit if you want to go to bed early; when Nine Bar winds down, crowds often come here for the live music.

**Boon's Ark** (☎ 2274045; www.goasearch.com/boonsark.html; r Rs 1000) This place has peaceful grounds on a quiet backstreet but is close to everything. The design of the rooms, which have nonperpendicular walls, lends warmth, as do the small verandas.

**Bethany Inn** (☎ 2273731; www.bethanyinn.com; d from Rs 450) Room rates can change from day to day at this well-kitted-out establishment next to China Town restaurant. Most of the rooms are basic but adequate, and there is a travel agency and Internet café on the premises. At the time of research, cottages (around Rs 1800) were being built out the back; they'll have everything short of a kitchen.

**Leoney Resort** (☎ 2273634, 2274914; www.leoneyresort.com; d/ste Rs 1500/2900; 🍷) Very nice, secure small hotel; rooms are set around a clear swimming pool, which outsiders can pay Rs 200 per day to use.

**Sterling Vagator Beach Resort** (☎ 2273276, 2274470, 2274471; d Rs 2500; 🍷) The overpriced rooms and grounds here are looking stale, but it does have nice palm-shaded grounds and a pool.

Other good choices include the **Jolly Jolly Lester** (☎ 2273620, 2274897; www.hoteljollygoa.com; r with/without AC Rs 1000/1500; 🍷) and **Jolly Jolly Romma** (d Rs 800), both of which are clean and well run.

Places that are popular in the Vagator area:

**Dolrina Guest House** (☎ 2274896, 2958170; dolrina@hotmail.com, dolrinagoa@yahoo.com; H No 536/1, PO Vagator, Bardez; Rs 270/500) Simple rooms with a garden and café out the back.

**Garden Villa** (☎ 5629454; Vagator Beach St; r standard Rs 600, deluxe Rs 1000-1500; 🍷) Very private in a spaced-out complex with restaurant. More expensive deluxe rooms have air-con.

**Salt N Pepper** (☎ 2273596; www.saltnpeppervagator.com; r Rs 500) Rooms are good value with hot water and TV. There's also a restaurant here.

**Jackie's Daynite Guest House** (☎ 2274320, 2273018; melfordsouza@hotmail.com; d Rs 300-600) Staff are

sometimes apathetic, but it's a nice quiet place. There is also a small restaurant and shop for basic provisions.

**Sunita** (☎ 2273690; sunitagoa@rediffmail.com; d Rs 300) Quintessentially Vagator. Rooms are no frills, there's a garden area to chill out in and it's near the action.

**Moonlight** (☎ 2273690; sunitagoa@rediffmail.com; d Rs 300) No-frills rooms near the action in Vagator.

**Siddeshwar Rest House** (☎ 2273963; d Rs 300) Basic doubles.

### CHAPORA

There's not much variety in the accommodation at Chapora; most of it is budget and most guests are long-term stayers.

**Casa de Olga** (☎ 2274355; Chapora; d without bathroom Rs 150, d with bathroom Rs 300-700) Casa de Olga, near Chapora Jetty and next to Custom House, is a lovely choice run by the very cordial Olga and her husband. The rooms are all extremely clean; even the shared bathrooms are spotless. Some rooms have their own balcony, hot-water showers and kitchenette facilities. Prices depend on facilities and duration of stay.

**Helinda Bar & Restaurant** (☎ 2274345; r with/without bathroom Rs 400/150) In 2004, Helinda built lovely new rooms that still have a fresh feel. Ask for one of these newer rooms, which have clean tiled bathrooms, though the older ones are cheaper. There's also an attached restaurant.

Other basic options include **Noble's Nest** (r without bathroom Rs 150), which is primarily a quiet place for a drink but has some basic rooms, and **Baba** (☎ 2273213; d without bathroom Rs 150), which also has basic rooms.

### Eating & Drinking VAGATOR

**Bean Me Up** (☎ 2273479; beanmeup@usa.net; H No 1639/2 Deulvaddo; mains Rs 100-200; 🍷 noon-4pm & 7-11pm Sun-Fri) This popular vegetarian courtyard restaurant offers healthy and hearty wraps, pizzas, pastas, juice concoctions and miscellaneous fare under heaving parachutes and leaf-filled nets. Bean Me Up also organises various cultural musical nights and hosts the occasional spontaneous party.

**Mango Tree** (☎ 3094464; mains Rs 50-150; 🍷 from 9am) The big drawcard here is the movie screened at 7.30pm every night. The wooden bar facing into the restaurant is an aesthetic positive, and the roof, furnished to look like something to do with mangos, looks more

like an egg sac. The Indian, Thai, Chinese, Italian and Mexican food is overpriced given the serving size, and it can sometimes take an unforgivably long time to arrive.

**Le Bluebird** (☎ 2273695; mains Rs 100-300; 🍷 9.30am-2pm & 7-11pm) This is an oddly situated and unusually classy French restaurant that does fine dining in a great outdoor area. Francophiles can enjoy imported wine here, and there's a good selection of vegetarian dishes on offer.

**Robert's Place** (☎ 2274392; 🍷 8.30am-4.30am) Trying to cater for and cash in on the Primrose Cafe crowd, Roberts serves a bit of everything and is open for insane hours.

### CHAPORA

Given that the restaurants and bars of Chapora are so tightly packed in together it's difficult for anything to stand out; in fact it's sometimes difficult to tell where one establishment stops and another starts.

**Sunrise Restaurant** (mains Rs 30-100; 🍷 from 7am) This is a nice place to sit in the shade for a drink and chat. It has a good-value veg English breakfast (Rs 80).

**Welcome** (mains Rs 25-100) Another good option, with generous servings and reasonable prices. It's location on the corner affords it a great view of the passing parade of people.

**Leena's Place** (mains Rs 40-120) Leena's is a popular restaurant with Thai, Chinese, Indian and Western offerings, plus an obligatory 'German Bakery'. This is one of the more polished places to eat in Chapora; being set back off the main drag helps it keep its class.

**Green Shadow** (mains Rs 30-80) Just off the main street, Green Shadow is a quiet place that serves Indian, Chinese, Mexican and Italian.

**Yak Restaurant** (☎ 2274170; mains Rs 30-90) On the small intersection marked by a banyan tree and a distinctive temple, Yak has Israeli food in among the usual Indian and Chinese suspects. The food is fine but the staff are sometimes indifferent.

**Jai Ganesh** (juices Rs 15-30) Right next door to Yak, this fruit juice centre is a popular place to smoke and drink while you watch (and are watched by) passers-by.

**Scarlet Cold Drinks** (drinks & desserts Rs 15-25) Popular for cold beverages and enormous fruit salads with big blocks of ice cream (Rs 15).

## PARTY'S A GOA?

Goa has a long and vibrant history of hosting parties. When the Portuguese were here, the colony became notorious as an immoral outpost where drinking and dancing lasted till dawn. The tradition continued when the 'Goa Freaks' arrived on the northern beaches in the 1960s. But the beach parties and full-moon raves of the 1970s and '80s seem like innocent affairs compared with the trance parties that replaced them in the '90s. This era also hailed the arrival of synthetic substances, so that ecstasy seemed the drug of choice over ganja.

## Changing Times

The late '90s and early 2000s heralded a big change; controversy over drugs and the state government's acknowledgment of the economic potential in appropriating the scene have threatened the future of party life in Goa. Today you'll hear the party veterans complaining about the increasing commercialisation of the scene, and general consensus seems to be that parties nowadays are not a patch on what they were. The synthetic drugs are still here (ecstasy, acid, speed, ketamine) but the hard hand of the law has meant that these have been pushed further behind the scenes (see p220). On top of this is the sudden diligence of the police in enforcing the ban on loud music after 10pm. The better organised (and more publicised) a party is, the more likely it is to be shut down before it even begins. But baksheesh still talks, and the random and remote locations of the raves still manages to sometimes foil law enforcers.

But parties are here to stay, albeit as altered incarnations of their more soulful ancestors. Visitors who have heard the notorious stories of wild nights in Goa are generally disappointed these days, but on the other hand the locals who once had to put up with what they perceived as self-indulgent Westerners gyrating in a drugged stupor to an incomprehensible beat have enjoyed the restoration of the quieter days of old. For the more hard-core partiers though, their party culture is not noise pollution, but a cosmic experience that, according to DJ Goa Gil, is there '...to uplift people's consciousness through the trance-dance experience'.

## Where to Party

Open-air rave parties have generally taken place around Anjuna and Vagator, at places such as Bamboo Forest (behind the market site in Anjuna), and Disco Valley and Spaghetti Beach (in Vagator). However, given that the police are party savvy, these often don't get up and running. The scene seems to have moved to Arambol, often at the lake, and people are ferried to parties by in-the-know taxi drivers. Locals in this area are increasingly agitated about having acquired the problems that were quashed further south. Groups of ravers heading off on their bikes is a sign that a party is on – or that someone *thinks* they know where a party is on. Often, false alarms or last-minute cancellations will result in a lot of aimless searching. The Christmas and New Year period is particularly hit and miss; local authorities either turn a blind eye or up their law-enforcement efforts.

Parties that do get the green light are an odd mix of ravers in psychedelic club wear swaying to the beat and glowing like radioactive waste, tourists joining in the Goa experience and locals angling for business – 'taxi?', 'chai?', 'cigarettes?' It's a heady mix that continues on well past dawn.

The gap left by the receding 'true' trance parties has been filled by the more aboveboard mainstream operators. Paradiso (p144) in Anjuna tries to recreate the scene with psychedelic paint and a chai market next to a Coffee Day Express – starkly symbolic of the way the scene is being commercialised. Growing frustration at fruitless searches for parties has also done wonders for Vagator's Nine Bar (opposite), which is allowed to have parties every night on the condition that it comes to a dead stop at 10pm. Another popular venue is Hill Top (opposite). The fact that Hill Top hasn't yet managed to get too cosy with the law means that its plans are frequently foiled, but when they get off the ground the result can be a night to reminisce about.

The difficulties faced by the Goa trance scene have worked to the advantage of mainstream club operators further south. The growing popularity of the big commercial operators like Club Cubana in Arpora have led to more and more venues of this ilk popping up along the coast.

**Paulo's Antique Bar** (drinks Rs 20-40) A tiny patch of socialness that has pride of place on this fascinating street.

## Entertainment

Chapora village doesn't have much in the way of nightlife, but it's a fascinating place to drink beer and watch people parade past.

Vagator is the centre of north Goa's party scene – along with several established bars, impromptu rave parties are occasionally organised at places like Disco Valley and Spaghetti Beach. Disco Valley is an open area of beach at the southern end of Vagator Beach, while Spaghetti Beach (also called Ozram Beach) is a flat area overlooking the ocean in a deserted area south of Little Vagator Beach.

However, given that the police are on a diligent quest to shut this sort of activity down these days, parties are being pushed further and further into the jungle. For this reason, they are rarely overtly advertised. Though parties are sometimes shut down before they begin, others get the green light and up, up and away they go. Find out what's going on by talking to local motorcycle taxi drivers or ask at places like Primrose Cafe and Hill Top.

**Nine Bar** (Sunset Point, Little Vagator Beach) A standard night out in Vagator usually starts at this open-air place overlooking Little Vagator Beach. It is still the central point of partying where trance and house music plays to a packed floor. Crowds start to gather at around 5pm and it's all over at 10pm when people wander about like lemmings, hoping someone else knows where the next party is.

**Primrose Cafe** (☎ 2273210) Towards the back of Vagator village, this is often where the next party is at. At Primrose the music usually continues till 2am or 3am (depending on restrictions) under a canopy of psychedelically painted trees.

**Alcove** (Little Vagator Beach; drinks Rs 20-80; ☎ till midnight) Some Nine Bar patrons overflow here for a quieter drink and occasional live music.

**Hill Top** (☎ 2273025, 2273665; hilltop104@hotmail.com) By day this is a peaceful place on the edge of the action, but by night it flouts the 10pm music restrictions to create action of its own. Hill Top throws parties on spe-

cial occasions and occasionally hosts fully fledged concerts of local and visiting musicians. There is the distinct smell of ganja in the air.

**Tin Tin Bar & Restaurant** (mains Rs 40-110; ☎ till late) On the main road down to Vagator Beach, Tin Tin occasionally has live music and is a relaxed place to play pool.

## Getting There & Around

Fairly frequent buses run to both Chapora and Vagator from Mapusa (Rs 10) throughout the day, some via Anjuna. The bus stop is close to the road junction near Soniya Travels in Chapora village. Buses to Mapusa also leave from the intersection near Mango Tree. Buses also continue up to Arambol via Siolim.

Vagator and Chapora villages are quite spread out and most people staying here rent a motorcycle or scooter – the Vagator hills are constantly alive with the buzz of these machines, and the number of bikes outside Nine Bar or Primrose Cafe during the evening is phenomenal (if you plan to leave early don't park too close or you might get blocked in). You can ask about motorcycle hire down near the beach at Vagator (try the car park) or anywhere along the main street in Chapora. Bicycle hire is more difficult and the steep hills around here make cycling a relative pain.

## CHAPORA TO ARAMBOL

The further you get from Panaji the quieter and less touristy the countryside becomes, although development and people are finding their way to the once deserted beaches north of the Chapora River. Where there once was a ferry crossing, now stands an enormous Siolim-Chopdem bridge. Drive carefully, but pause for a moment, if you can, to admire the view on either side. At present, the area between Chapora and Arambol is blooming; some beaches have a small and exclusive scene, while others are just peaceful pockets of coastline.

Heading north from Anjuna, Chapora or Mapusa, make for Siolim, the village on the south bank of the Chapora River. The main road through the village leads to the bridge that takes you across to Chopdem. From there, take the first left at the signpost to Morjim. This is the coast road, which takes you the slow way up to Arambol.



## Siolim

☎ 0832

Siolim is overlooked by travellers, who use it as a mere fulcrum between Anjuna and Arambol, but it is actually a particularly pleasant place in its own right. If you're looking to rent a house for an extended period in Goa, this might be a sensible place to do it. Almost any side street leads you through authentic slices of village living, where signs offer houses for rent.

There's an atmospheric **market** along the Chapora River, where you can watch women open the shells of mussels at a speed that will impress. On Wednesday mornings there is another small **market** (☎ 7.30-10am), which is full of home-grown produce; it's near St Anthony Church.

**Computer Shop** (☎ 9822485672; nrohan@sancharnet.in; Shop EW6, St Anthony Community Centre; per hr Rs 20) is a good Internet café near St Anthony Church.

A finalist in 2001 for the Unesco World Heritage Asia Pacific Award, **Siolim House** (☎ 2272138; www.siolimhouse.com; Wadi; d standard/superior Rs 3000/3750; 🍷) is exclusive without the artificiality that often comes with exclusivity. The seven rooms have elegant and individual class, and the simple but prominent pool next to the house can be admired from the breezy open-air sitting area. The restaurant is set among proud white pillars around the central courtyard and is only open to guests and their friends. If you can't afford to stay, try bidding in the online silent auction.

## Morjim

☎ 0832

Welcome to Russia Town. For some inexplicable reason, Morjim is the destination of choice for Russians on holiday, and only receives a trickle of day-trippers from other beaches.

Morjim is a tiny village at the mouth of the Chapora River, 4.5km southwest of Chopdem. The clean, quiet beach is an exposed strip of sand heading north from the river mouth and backed as much by pine trees as by palms. There are good views south to the headland and Chapora Fort. The southern end of Morjim Beach is a protected area for rare olive ridley turtles (opposite).

Accommodation options have increased over the last few years as the beach has

grown in popularity. Rooms can be rented in village homes for around Rs 150 per night, but the best option is the handful of guesthouses and huts at the northern end of the beach; there are also beach shacks here. To get here you can either walk a couple of kilometres along the beach or drive back through the village, turning north on the road to Asvem and Mandrem Beach (passing Milagres Church), then left at the signposted turn-off to the beach. At the junction here, Amigos is a small shop offering Internet access and currency exchange.

**Shanti** (☎ 9881289334; webb.elena@gmail.com; huts Rs 300-500) is a charming Russian-run choice for beach-hut life. The huts are across the road from the beach, but there's a lovely beachside restaurant and services such as massage.

As well as its standard rooms, **Julian's Guest House** (☎ 2244632; r Rs 500) has more-basic rooms in a more basic building out the back for Rs 250.

**Camp 69** (☎ 2244458; huts Rs 250) is not as picturesque as beachside living should be: it sits near a rather filthy patch of beach. Having said that the facilities are adequate and there's no shortage of people (mostly Russian) wanting to stay here.

**Goan Café** (Lobos; ☎ 2244394; www.goaplates.com; huts/rooms incl breakfast Rs 450/600) has a lovely restaurant.

For those that prefer actual rooms to huts, **Britto's Guesthouse** (☎ 2244245; r Rs 250) is a very hospitable option run by a family who will also provide breakfast upon request.

## Asvem Beach

☎ 0832

Asvem Beach is a long, flat and hassle-free stretch of beach that attracts only the most determined idlers. Although virtually unheard of by travellers until recently, groups of palm-thatch and bamboo huts have sprung up here, attracting visitors looking to do nothing more than relax. It's said that one of Goa's first bamboo beach huts was built here by a British carpenter in 1996 – now they're all over the place!

The beach is small and picturesque, backed by sparse stands of palm trees. It's easily accessible since the road is only about 100m back.

The rooms at brand-new **White Feather Guest House** (☎ 985024201; whitefeather\_gh@yahoo.co.in;

## TURTLE BEACHES

Goan beaches have provided nesting places for olive ridley turtles for many years. These giant turtles have a remarkable in-built homing device that enables them to return to nest at the beach where they first hatched – even after 15 years out at sea. One of those beaches is Morjim, but the turtle numbers began to dwindle dangerously because of poaching – locals were digging up the eggs and selling them in the markets for a couple of rupees each. If a turtle was found out of the water it was usually killed for its meat and shell. Increased tourism in the area also posed a threat; eggs were trampled at rave parties and pollution threatened the survival of those that managed to hatch.

In 1996 the Goa Foundation, on the urging of a local resident, stepped in and enlisted the help of the Forest Department to patrol the beach and start a turtle conservation programme. Locals who once profited from selling the eggs are now paid to protect them at the Turtle Sanctuary (at the south end of Morjim Beach), which has been established for this very purpose.

The practice of picking up recently hatched turtles and putting them in buckets to show tourists should be discouraged, since environmentalists believe these baby turtles may not survive, even if they're released into the sea.

The turtle nesting season is from October to March, and the turtles usually come ashore only between full moon and new moon nights.

rRs 2000) are overpriced, but this will perhaps change. Superbly arranged with a separate sleeping and sitting area, rooms have a fridge and some basic kitchenware. There's a balcony around the entire building, and a rooftop area from where you can enjoy the view of the coast. The family who runs it are justifiably proud of the effort they have put into small details; for example, towels are folded into animals – though we'd rather drip-dry than unravel a crocodile!

**Gopal** (☎ 2244431; gopal@ingoa.com; huts/r/beach-front huts Rs 300/500/1000) has a range of rooms and a good restaurant selling set breakfasts (Rs 75).

Nearby **Change Your Mind** (☎ 5613716; huts Rs 150), which obviously hasn't been told what the going rate for beach huts is, practically gives its huts away.

The nicest place to eat along the beach (and to stay for that matter) is **Le Restaurant Francais** (☎ 9822121712; mains Rs 40-160), next to Gopal. With flowing white décor, this is a perfect place to while away an hour or two, though it's not the cheap affair that its neighbours are.

Further down the beach and heading towards Mandrem are another couple of good options with a nice piece of beach. **Arabian Sea** (☎ 9850686134; huts Rs 300) has a pleasant restaurant that's conducive to settling in for the day. **Paradise** (☎ 2247832; r Rs 350) is a similar affair but has rooms in a building across the road from the beach. Further down the

beach, heading towards the town of Asvem, is **Antonio's Paradise** (☎ 9822100964; huts Rs 500), which has standard beach huts.

## Mandrem

Continuing north, turn left at the T-junction for Mandrem Beach, or right for Mandrem village. The beach and the majority of the accommodation is a kilometre or so past the village. Mandrem is another peaceful area with a broad beach and some good accommodation among the coconut groves. There are several groups of bamboo huts along the beach, all with semi-open-air restaurants facing the Arabian Sea. Mandrem beach has a series of typical beach huts and restaurants. The other accommodation option is to head towards the beach in the Junasawaddo area of Mandrem and find something there.

Salvador Dali would highly approve of **River Cat Villa** (☎ 2247928; www.villarivercat.com; d €15-33), with its hammocks hanging from the roof and palm trees growing through its balconies, shading mattresses in the open air. You could stay for a month and every day discover a new nook or cranny to read in. Rooms open up onto the enormous circular balconies, and the entire property backs onto the river.

**Little Nest** (☎ 2247413, 9422394809; d/apt Rs 250/400) is an absolute bargain. Brand-new rooms all have bathrooms and balconies. For those looking to stay longer, the facilities in the

apartments will enable self-sufficiency. While there's no beach view to speak of, the short walk is worth the fantastic value.

**D'Souza Residency** (☎ 2247483; albert\_d16@rediffmail.com; r Rs 400) has a nice sunken restaurant situated in a pleasant bend in the road. The D'Souza family are hospitable, and at the time of research were building more rooms to accommodate guests.

Among the cluster of beach huts in Mandrem is the very prominent **Dunes** (☎ 2247219, 2247071; www.dunesgoa.com; huts & cottages Rs 600). The thatched huts and stone cottages are all reasonably kept, and there is a laid-back vibe. There is also a Ayurvedic massage centre.

Near Dunes, **Riva** (☎ 2247088; enquiry@rivaresorts.com; huts from Rs 1000) is trying for a more up-market feel – and it's doing a good job. Some bamboo huts face the sea and are fitted out with TV and hot water. There's also a decent restaurant, and a party atmosphere is sometimes mustered on the dance floor.

Before the road narrows to the path that leads to River Cat Villa, you'll find **Sing A-Long Resort** (☎ 2247931; ambrose\_pinto@rediffmail.com; d Rs 800) in a brand-new white building. Rooms are unimaginative but are clean and happily situated in a quiet area with a pleasant stroll to the beach.

## ARAMBOL

☎ 0832

Although it is one of Goa's more far-flung beaches, Arambol (Harmal) has well and truly been discovered.

Travellers have been drifting up here for years, attracted by the remote location and the prominent headland with beautiful, rocky bays. A mushrooming industry of facilities and accommodation has appeared to service them, and in the high season the beach and the road leading down to it can be crowded. Arambol is still a lot quieter than anything south of Vagator though, and it generally attracts travellers looking to chill out for a while. There are burgeoning adventure-sports and music scenes here. Women should be cautious; we have had reports of attacks on quiet areas of the beach.

## Orientation

Buses from Mapusa stop on the main road at the back part of Arambol village, where there's a church, school and a few shops,

but no bank. From here, a side road leads 1.5km down to the village, and the beach is about 500m further on. There are a few stores, travel agencies and Internet places on the road running parallel to the beach, but most services can be found on the busy, narrow road leading down to the beach. It's easy finding a seaside restaurant or hotel that suits in Arambol. Just continue to follow the path along the coast and you will lead through the options.

## Information

Internet access is widely available, often in travel agents.

**Arambol Police Outpost** (☎ 2242914) The police are based here.

**Blue Fin Communications** (per hr Rs 40)

**Cyberzone** (per hr Rs 40)

**Delight Cyber Café** (per hr Rs 40)

**Divya Travels** (☎ 2242297; per hr Rs 40)

**Ganga Travels** (569B Khalchawada)

**JBL Enterprises** (☎ 3953640) A well-dressed (in hard-to-miss purple) new kid on the block, where you can surf the Net in air-conditioned comfort.

**St Anthony Cybercafé** (Playlist; per hr Rs 40) An inland option where you can also stock up on music.

**Sanket Travels** (663/3 Khalchawada)

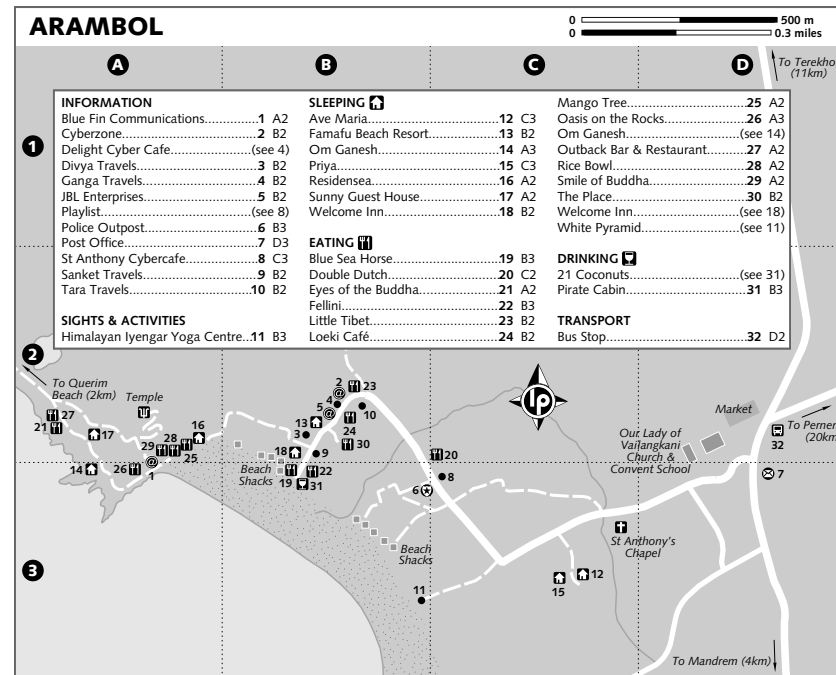
**Tara Travels** (☎ 2417617)

## Activities

The main beach is good for swimming, but over the headland are several more attractive bays. At low tide, if you continue past the headland and keep walking for about 45 minutes you'll come to the near-deserted Querim Beach. You can also walk south along the beach to Mandrem (about one hour).

Behind the second bay is a small **fresh-water pool** that's pleasant to splash about in, although it's fast being swallowed up by the encroaching sea and, away from the source of the spring, the water is quite brackish. This is where rave parties sometimes happen.

There's a healthy adventure-sports scene in Arambol. Much to the enormous delight of locals, there are no jet skis or other such noise polluters, but there are enthusiastic paragliders and kite-surfers around. To find them, head to the Surf Shack in front of the **Surf Club** (☎ 2292484, 9850554006; flyinfishbarbados@hotmail.com; Dando Wada) at South Arambol Beach, close to Mandrem, which also



has surfboards and boogie boards for hire. **Kite Surf Goa** (☎ 9822867570, 9850475241; airambol2000@yahoo.de; equipment hire per day Rs 800) is a registered business run by Uwe and Stefan from Germany. You can usually hunt them down in person through the Surf Shack. As well as renting equipment, Kite Surf Goa runs 10-hour kite-surfing courses (Rs 9500).

On the sand dunes of Arambol Beach is **Himalayan Iyengar Yoga Centre** (www.hiyoga.com; Arambol Beach), which runs five-day courses in hatha yoga from mid-November to mid-March. This is the winter centre of the iyengar yoga school in Dharamsala, and is run by the same teacher, Sharat Arora. Five-day courses for new and more-experienced students cost Rs 1800, but the more days you do the less you pay. Booking and registration must be done in person at the centre on Tuesday at 2pm. Courses start on Friday. There are also intensive two- to three-week courses for more experienced hatha yoga devotees and special short courses combining yoga with Ayurvedic treatment.

## Sleeping

Accommodation in Arambol is mostly in the form of cliffside rooms or huts at the north end of the main beach. Given the extraordinary location perched on the rocks overlooking this pleasant stretch of beach, it's surprising that the accommodation has managed to avoid big development and is still exclusively focused on budget and mid-range travellers.

**Sunny Guest House** (☎ 2297675; r Rs 400-600) This is a good example of the classic Arambol accommodation: no unnecessary frills but the necessary cliffside location.

**Om Ganesh** (☎ 2297675; r Rs 400-600) In a similar vein to Sunny, Om Ganesh is another popular choice. It has options on either side of the path, but the more happily situated corner rooms are as close to the beach as you can be without getting wet. They fill up fast.

**Residensea** (huts Rs 350) At the north end of the beach, Residensea is a collection of simple, lockable bamboo huts that are representative of the type of accommodation you'll find in these parts.

**Ave Maria** (☎ 2242974; d with/without bathroom Rs 350/250) This comfortable option is hard to miss; it's in a large building painted like a child-care centre. Ave Maria is off the beach but is nicely situated in a quiet area of coconut palms. There's also a very pleasant rooftop restaurant.

**Priya** (☎ 2292661; d with/without Rs 200/150) The premises and rooms here are smaller than what's on offer at its more outlandish neighbour, but its size just adds to the cosy family feel. It can be an intimately sociable place depending on who else has checked in.

**Famafu Beach Resort** (☎ 2242516; H No 470 Arambol Beach Rd; r Rs 400) On the road leading to the beach, Famafu is an uncharacteristic three-storey concrete-block hotel, but it gets good reviews. Rooms have hot water and are clean and good value, and the staff are always smiling.

**Welcome Inn** (☎ 2242510; d Rs 350-400) Also on the road leading towards the beach, Welcome Inn has seven small but clean doubles.

### Eating & Drinking

There's a nice assortment of eateries in Arambol. So far, there's nothing too shiny and flash in the area; restaurants remain thick on atmosphere and high on quality. There is a seemingly endless selection of eating places that wrap around the rocks at the north end of the beach.

**Double Dutch** (mains Rs 30-120; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) This is a great place that doesn't try too hard; its sign reads 'Nothing allowed, lousy service, good food'. There's a very useful notice board at the entrance, with information about various courses and treatments.

**Fellini** (mains Rs 60-150) Serving fantastic Italian food, this is Arambol's top restaurant. There is a good range of pizzas, calzones and pasta, as well as satisfying focaccias.

**Place** (mains Rs 60-160) This is an interesting option that sets up in the middle of a residential area during season. The Bulgarian restaurant with orange cushions and candlelight under the trees has a lovely atmosphere. Veal with vegetables and rosemary (Rs 155) is about as far away from Goa and into the heart of Bulgaria as it sounds, and the fruit punch (Rs 40) is the best in the world, seriously. Follow the red-and-white arrows through the warren of pathways to find it.

**Om Ganesh** (☎ 2297657; mains Rs 40-100) This is a pleasant but small eating area perched out on the rocks with very cheap food, that is very, very tasty. The veg hakka noodles (Rs 40) are a real winner.

**White Pyramid** (mains Rs 40-130; ☎ from 9am) Next to the Iyengar Yoga Centre on the sand dunes overlooking the beach, this is the perfect place to while away hours on a cushion under a tree. The menu ranges from sushi to roast vegetables.

**Welcome Inn** (☎ 2242510; mains Rs 20-80) A dimly lit German bakery and hotel with a curiously conspiratorial air in among the pastries. It's a popular hang-out for Israelis.

**Loeki Café** (mains Rs 25-100) This is a very unassuming place with a laid-back vibe. It serves Goan, Chinese and European dishes and is a good spot for a drink. Jam sessions are held on Sunday and Thursday.

**Blue Sea Horse** (☎ 9823883510; mains Rs 40-300) Located where the road meets the beach, Blue Sea Horse has a predominantly seafood menu and arranges the occasional party during season.

Among the endless choice of restaurants dotted along the cliffside or overlooking the sea are the following:

**Mango Tree** (mains Rs 40-90) Self-proclaimed chill-out place, where cushions and Chinese lanterns set the mood.

**Rice Bowl** (☎ 982248032; mains Rs 40-90) Chinese, Japanese and Tibetan menu with a view stretching for miles down the beach.

**Little Tibet** (mains Rs 40-80) A low-key place that meets Arambol's *momo* needs.

**Smile of Buddha** (mains Rs 30-140) Israeli, Indian, Chinese and Goan cuisine.

**Eyes of the Buddha** (mains Rs 30-120) Standard extensive menu. Popular spot for breakfast.

**Outback Bar & Restaurant** (mains Rs 30-80) Boasts seafood specialities.

**Oasis on the Rocks** (mains Rs 60-250) Well located and low key. Candles create romance at night.

### Entertainment

In addition to the parties during peak season, there is a healthy music scene in Arambol, which attracts musicians from far and wide. It's hard to generalise about any music 'scene' but, depending on the line-up, the crowd and your perspective, a night of live music in these parts can either keep the Goan spirit alive or shoot it in the foot. Keep an eye on posters advertising live music.

**Surf Club** (☎ 2292484, 9850554006; flyinfishbarbados@hotmail.com; Dando Wada) On Tuesdays and Fridays this place has film nights and live music, with the line-up of talent depending largely on who's floating through town.

**Loeki Café** (Arambol Beach Rd; ☎ 8am till late) Has jam sessions on Sunday and Thursday.

Parties are sometimes organised where the road meets the beach, and where **Pirate Cabin** (mains Rs 40-250) meets **21 Coconuts** (mains Rs 40-200, local beer Rs 20). Pamphlets will flutter down the coast of north Goa inviting the masses, sometimes to such good effect that it's difficult to give credit to any one establishment. On other nights, the drinking just spontaneously turns to partying. And on other nights still (there really is no rhyme or reason) you can catch a quiet flick at 21 Coconuts.

### Getting There & Away

There are buses from Mapusa to Arambol (Rs 12, 1½ hours), via Siolim and Chopdem, every couple of hours. Buses also head north to Terekhol and Pernem, and a few buses take the back road past Mandrem and Morjim.

You could get a group together and hire a taxi to travel here (around Rs 350 from Mapusa or Anjuna). From Dabolim Airport, prepaid taxis cost Rs 682 for the 65km journey.

If you're coming by bus from Mumbai, you can ask to be let off at Pernem and take a local bus, taxi or autorickshaw from there. The nearest train station on the Konkan Railway is Pernem, about 2km from the town itself. Again you can get off here and catch a taxi to Arambol.

Motorcycles can be hired from touts at the main northern entrance to the beach. In the high season a Honda Kinetic costs around Rs 200 a day.

There are boats every Wednesday to the Anjuna flea market (one way Rs 75).

### NORTH OF ARAMBOL Querim Beach

North of Arambol and south of the Terekhol River lies the almost untouched sand of Querim Beach, plus a couple of beach shacks. Querim is accessible from Arambol via a narrow path that leads around the headland from the second bay, or by road through the exceptionally pretty countryside along the south bank of the Terekhol River. There are some very basic rooms available behind the beach shacks but visitors are better off staying in Arambol or Terekhol, and walking, cycling or motoring here for the day.

### Terekhol Fort

At the northernmost point of Goa is Terekhol (Tiracol), on the north bank of the river of the same name. Its key feature is a small Portuguese fort (☎ 11am-5pm), which has a tiny whitewashed chapel within its walls and is now an upmarket hotel, the Fort Tiracol Heritage Hotel (opposite).

Originally built by the rajas of Sawantwadi, the fort was finally captured by the viceroy, Dom Pedro de Almeida, in 1746. The fort was rebuilt and the church, which takes up almost all of the available space within the fort, was added.

The fact that the fort was on the wrong side of the natural border (the river) led it to be involved in considerable controversy. In the early 19th century the British demanded that it be handed over, and later, when the first Goan-born governor,

### THE AUTHOR'S CHOICE

**Fort Tiracol Heritage Hotel** (☎ 0832-227631, 9226360618; nilaya@sancharnet.in; r/ste incl breakfast & dinner Rs 5500/12,000) If a historical monument like a fort has to be converted into a hotel then you couldn't possibly ask for a more tasteful effort than the Fort Tiracol Heritage Hotel. It is, in fact, one of the nicest places to stay in the entire state; at least that's what you'll be thinking as you're sitting at the rooftop restaurant at the northernmost point of Goa, looking south over what feels like the entire state. The seven rooms (named for the days of the week) preside over the meeting point of the Arabian Sea and the Terekhol River, where an occasional dolphin can be spotted. There is an intentionally Mediterranean feel to the décor, complete with white umbrellas, rounded stone walls, airy bathrooms with open showers and wood-framed windows that swing out to the ocean. If you can, stay in Wednesday. Querim Beach across the river is yours and, sometimes, yours alone.

Bernardo Peres da Silva, was ousted, his supporters took over the fort. Finally, in the years before Independence, the whole of the northern border was at the centre of anti-Portuguese demonstrations, and several demonstrators were killed here.

The fort makes a good outing on a motorcycle. The winding 11km road from Arambol passes through villages and rice paddies and rises up to provide sensational views over the countryside.

Amid the few budget options in Terekhol is the prudently named **Hygienic Restaurant** (☎ 0832-227670; r Rs 300), which has a couple of rooms just below the fort. It's run by a friendly family.

Ferries from Querim to Terekhol leave every 30 minutes or so between 6.15am and 10pm. As usual people can cross for free but bikes sometimes cost Rs 4 and cars Rs 10.

## INLAND BARDEZ

Away from the coast, north Goa has less to offer the tourist than the central or south parts of the state, and consequently receives fewer visitors. However, Bardez taluka has several sights east of National Highway (NH) 17, between Panaji and Mapusa. This

is a peaceful area of rural villages, farmland, churches and temples, and makes a pleasant day trip if you have your own transport. The best way to explore this area is by hired motorcycle, or with a car and driver from Panaji, Mapusa or any of the beach resorts.

The most convenient and scenic route is to follow the back roads from Panaji along the north bank of the Mapusa River, then turn west towards Mapusa itself. Heading northeast from the Mandovi Bridge, the first village you come to is Britona. Following the road north to Aldona, visit Corjuem Fort before turning west to Mapusa and either heading back to Panaji or continuing to the coast.

### Britona & Pomburpao

☎ 0832

The parish church at Britona, **Nossa Senhora de Penha de Franca** (Our Lady of the Rock of France), occupies a fine location on the junction of the Mandovi and Mapusa Rivers, looking straight across to Chorao Island on one side and the Ribandar Causeway on the other.

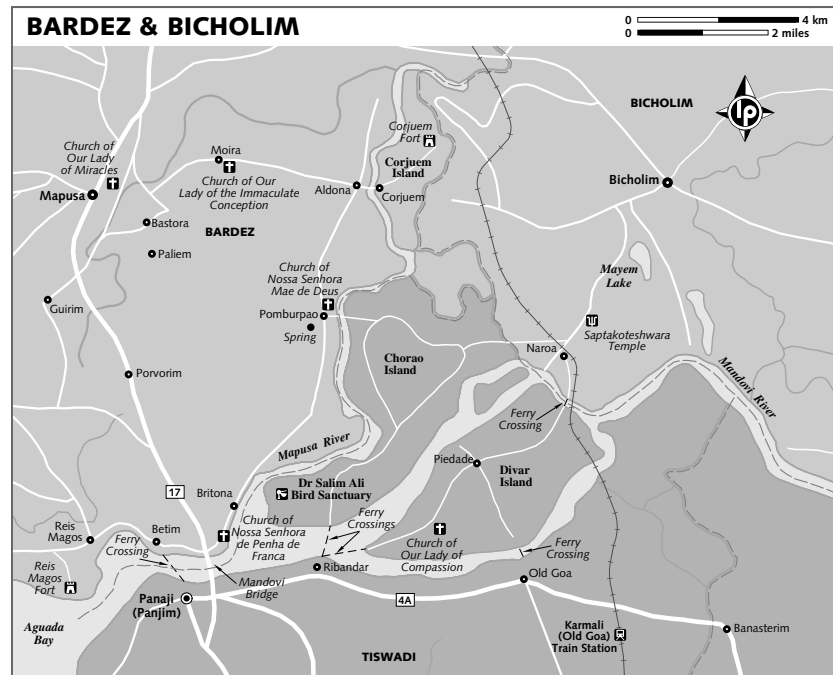
Nossa Senhora de Penha de France was a Spanish saint. After one hair-raising voyage

### DETOUR: ALDONA & CORJUEM FORT

Another 4km north of Pomburpao you reach the large village of **Aldona**. The **Church of St Thomas** on the banks of the Mapusa River is a grand sight, particularly when viewed from the now defunct ferry crossing. The church was built in 1596 and has been renovated in recent years. There is a legend about the treasure that once adorned the church's statues. On one occasion, as a group of thieves crossed the river into Aldona, they were met by a young boy who warned them not to carry out their crime. As they were attempting to remove valuables, the church bells started to ring. Fleeing in a panic, some of the thieves drowned, while others were captured. As the leader was led out, he recognised the statue of St Thomas as the boy who had cautioned him against his mischief.

From Aldona you can cross the disturbingly modern new bridge across the river to visit the abandoned **Corjuem Fort** on the other side of Corjuem Island. Until the early 18th century, the Mapusa River formed the boundary of Portuguese influence, and the dark red laterite wall above the ferry point in Aldona betrays the ancient lines of the fortress that used to stand here. Around 1705, however, the Portuguese influence extended eastwards, and the small fort on Corjuem Island was built.

Squat and thick walled, standing alone on a small hillock, the fort has an ironic element of *beau geste* about it. Although there's not a whole lot to see here, it's easy to imagine this place as a solitary outpost in the jungle nearly three centuries ago, filled with homesick Portuguese soldiers half expecting to be overrun at any moment. One of the defenders of the fort is said to have been Ursula e Lancastre, a Portuguese woman who travelled the world disguised as a man, eventually finding herself here as a soldier. It was not until she was captured and stripped that her secret was discovered. This did not put an end to her military career, however – she married the captain of the guard.



in which the sailors saved themselves from certain death by appealing to Nossa Senhora, she came to be associated with seafarers, and thus she was favoured by many of those who had survived the voyage to India.

The interior of the church is beautifully decorated, with a high vaulted ceiling and a simple reredos (ornamented screen behind the altar in Goan churches) with painted scenes on it. The church is best visited in the morning and holds one service (in Konkani) on most days.

About 5km north of Britona is the village of Pomburpao, where the church of **Nossa Senhora Mae de Deus** (Our Lady Mother of God) is also notable for its beautiful interior and reredos.

### Porvorim

☎ 0832

Porvorim is an easy trip from either Mapusa or Panaji. It can also be an add-on to a trip through the rest of inland Bardez, but given that it's on the NH17, a trip from a main town in a taxi is probably the most

sensible way of getting here. The reason to visit Porvorim is the museum **Houses of Goa** (☎ 2410711; Torda, Salvador do Mundo; admission Rs 25; ☎ 10am-8pm). This unmistakable triangular building, the work of renowned architect Gerard da Cunha, shows the Goan fusion of Indian and Portuguese architecture. To find it, take the Britona Rd from O'Coqueiro junction and turn left at the fork. You can't miss it.

### BICHOLIM

To the east of Bardez, Bicholim taluka is good place to head on a hired motorcycle if you want to explore the Goan countryside.

With your own transport you can combine Bardez and Bicholim with a scenic loop by riding from Panaji to Old Goa, crossing by ferry to Divar Island, continuing to the north of the island and crossing by ferry again to Narao. From here head east to Mayem Lake, then north to Bicholim.

Another option is to take the ferry from the small island of Pomburpao to Chorao Island, then head to the bridge on the east

### CRIME PAYS AT O'COQUEIRO

**O'Coqueiro** (☎ 2417806), a well-known Goan restaurant in Alto Porvorim, boasts more than just a decent pomfret *recheiado* (fish stuffed with red masala filling). It was the scene of one of India's most famous captures (or at least recaptures), and after a Rs 5 million renovation in 2005 the restaurant reopened to unveil a life-sized statute of Charles Sobhraj to commemorate the event.

Sobhraj (also known as 'the Serpent') was a notorious con man, thief, murderer and suspected serial killer. In the mid-1970s, this Vietnamese-Indian-French man was Asia's most wanted man, facing arrest for murdering travellers in Thailand, Nepal, Afghanistan and India. Sobhraj would charm foreign tourists with his charisma, but one by one they would disappear, and their bodies would be found drugged and disfigured.

After being briefly jailed in Bombay in 1973 over a bungled jewellery theft, Sobhraj flitted around Asia pulling off various scams, establishing a cultlike family of followers and travelling under enough disguises and stolen passports to elude police and the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) for years. He finally came unstuck after attempting to drug a group of French tourists in Delhi in 1977. Amazingly, he was charged just with that offence and one count of manslaughter, and was jailed for only 12 years.

With a 20-year warrant for his arrest outstanding in Thailand (and a certain death penalty), he bided his time in Delhi's gruelling Tihar Prison, where he led a relatively comfortable life by befriending and manipulating prison guards and fellow prisoners. In 1986 he threw a party, drugged the prison guards and walked out.

Not long after, Sobhraj was spotted by a policeman in Goa, where authorities swooped on him in O'Coqueiro and sent him back to Tihar Prison for another 10 years. Sobhraj later claimed he had allowed himself to be caught to escape extradition to Thailand.

In 1997 he was freed from prison and fled to France, a free man at the age of 52. But in August 2004, Sobhraj was arrested again in a Nepalese casino for the 1975 murder of an American tourist.

During his time in France, Sobhraj made a fortune living off his notoriety; he was reportedly paid US\$15 million for a book and movie deal. And now the proprietors of O'Coqueiro are cashing in on his crimes.

Australian writer Richard Neville wrote *The Life and Crimes of Charles Sobhraj*. A film about his life, *Bottom Line*, was released in 2002.

of the island, which will take you to the Bicholim area. You may need to ask for directions occasionally, but there are some signs to both Mayem Lake (Mayem Lake GTDC Resort) and Saptakoteshwara Temple.

### Saptakoteshwara Temple

Among the most famous sights in the area is the Saptakoteshwara Temple, near the village of Naroa. The temple itself is tiny and is beautifully complemented by its natural surroundings. Tucked away in a narrow emerald green valley, the little hamlet is undisturbed by anything apart from a few mopeds and the occasional tour bus.

The deity worshipped here is an incarnation of Shiva. According to Hindu legend, the Saptarishis (Seven Great Sages), performed penance for seven million years, a feat that pleased Shiva so much that he came to earth personally to bless them. The incarnation

that he appeared in at the time was Saptakoteshwara, which was to become the favoured deity of the great Kadamba dynasty.

The lingam (phallic symbol of Shiva) that now resides in this temple underwent considerable adventures before arriving here. Having been buried to avoid the ravages of the Muslims, it was recovered and placed in a great temple on Divar Island, but when the Portuguese desecrated the spot it was smuggled away and subsequently lost. Miraculously discovered again, it was placed in a simple temple on this new site. It is said that the great Hindu leader Shivaji used to come here to worship, and personally saw to it that the temple was reconstructed, leading to the small but solid structure that stands today.

If you've got your own transport, finding the temple may require some asking around. From the ferry point at Naroa (from Divar

Island), follow the road for approximately 2km before forking right down a small tarmac lane. The temple is on your left, 1.5km down this lane. Follow the red and green archaeology arrows until you arrive at the temple, and don't get distracted by decoys – you'll know the temple when you see it.

### Mayem Lake

East of Naroa and about 35km from Panaji, Mayem Lake is a pleasant sort of place that's popular among Indian families as a picnic spot; tours run by the GTDC also stop for lunch here. The key reason to go to Mayem Lake is to escape beaches and tourists; it really is a quiet retreat.

**Mayem Lake View** (☎ 0832-2362144; d with/without AC Rs 70/550; ☺) is probably the nicest GTDC establishment in the state. Its rooms

are extremely good value, particularly those perched at the river's edge. If you want to be on your own, this is really the place to come to.

There's also a restaurant run by the GTDC on the other side of the river, and an area where you can hire paddleboats for Rs 80/120 per 30 minutes/one hour.

You can get here from Mapusa via Thivim and Bicholim. The road crosses some desolate and sunbaked countryside, after which the small valley and lake come as a relief. Coming from Panaji, the quickest and most scenic route is to take the ferry to either Chorao or Divar Island, then another ferry across to the mainland, and then head east about 3km to the lake. This is a good outing on a motorcycle, but a bit of a long haul for little reward if you're on a bicycle.

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