

GOA

a map made by Zostel
for young travellers
FREE MAP · GOA

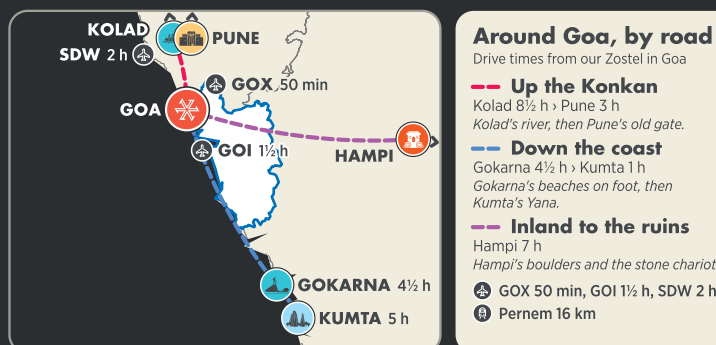


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Namaskar, Goa!

Namaskar! Goa is India's smallest state, and its north ends where ours begins: Morjim, on the quiet bank of the Chapora river, where Olive Ridley turtles come ashore to nest and the forest guards watch over the eggs. Across the water, Chapora's fort sits on its red hill above Vagator; up the coast run Ashwem, Mandrem and Arambol, its sweet-water lake behind the dunes. Hear the poder's horn at dawn, eat fish curry like everyone here does, say dev borem korum, take it susegad, and come home to our house in Morjim.



Every number is a tip on the map overleaf, in the colour of its kind: Forts, Chapels, Old Stories Rivers, Turtles, Red Cliffs Nuste, Please Flea Market Mornings Feasts, Shigmo and Song Stayed for the Sunsets. A drawing beside a line shows what you will find there:

Stay with us in Goa

One Zostel in Goa, in Morjim on the Chapora's north bank: a bus from Mapusa, a taxi from Mopa or Thivim.

Zostel Goa (Morjim)
In Madhlowaddo, Morjim's lanes, a few minutes from the beach; dorms and rooms round a pool, a café, funky walls and a lively common area. It is a social house; if you want quiet, say so.

Maps: © OpenStreetMap contributors (ODbL), data fetched 2026-10-13 (UTC). Terrain: Terrain Tiles on AWS (Mapzen/Tilezen), from SRTM courtesy of NASA and the U.S. Geological Survey. Walk lines routed by FOSSGIS OSRM on OpenStreetMap. Drawings: the Zostel brand's own. Things change: check the day's timings at the gate.

Practical tips

Getting in

Mopa, North Goa's airport, is about 30 km from our door, Dabolim about 55 km. Trains on the Konkarn Railway stop at Permem and Thivim. Buses run to Mapusa's stand, and from there a local bus to Morjim's stop: we are a short walk from it.



Getting around

A scooter is how the coast moves: hire one with its papers in order, and wear the helmet. It is the law on the main roads. Buses link the villages to Mapusa. For the long hops, book a local taxi.

The sea and the rivers

The safe swimming season is November to early May. Keep away from the river mouths, the Chapora's above all, and from undertow off some beaches; swim where the lifeguards are, between their flags. In the monsoon, stay out of the water.

The turtles

From about October to March Olive Ridley turtles nest on Morjim and Mandrem. The Forest Department fences and guards the nests: look from outside the fence, keep lights off the beach at night, and never touch an egg or a hatchling. It is protected by law.

The season

Mid-November to mid-February is dry and easy; it is hot after that. The monsoon, from June, closes the beach huts and empties the sand, and the villages turn green.



Mind the rules

No drinking on open beaches or roads in Goa. Keep the music down near the nesting beaches: the High Court has said so.

Money

Banks and exchanges in Mapusa and the bigger villages; carry some cash for the small shops and the markets, where cards may not work.



Morjim's sand: from the river mouth to Ashwem

6.9 km · about 3.5 hours with stops · 5 stops

From the Chapora's mouth, the fort across the water, past the turtle hatchery and inland to the Morjai temple's kaavi walls; then up Morjim's long tideline to Ashwem's beginner surf.



The stops

- 3** The Olive Ridley nests, Morjim
The protected hatchery on Tenwada's sand, where the forest guards rebury each clutch and keep watch.
- 2** Shri Morjai temple, Morjim
Kaavi on the facade, side wall and ceiling: red-and-white patterns scratched into the plaster.
- 1** Our Lady of Miracles, Morjim
Our Lady of Miracles, the same Milagres as Mapusa's spring feast, in a parish from 1903.
- 4** Morjim beach
Winter flocks of gulls and terns resting on the sand; Chapora's fort on its hill across the river.
- 14** Ashwem beach
Surf schools' boards lined up on the sand, and the little Holy Cross chapel by the road.

5 minutes of history

1006 The Kadambas

The Kadamba kings rule Goa for three centuries and a half, from Chandor, with Gopakapattana on the Zuari as their port.

1492 The Adil Shahs

After the Bahmani sultans and Vijayanagara, Goa passes to the Adil Shahs of Bijapur, who raise a fort above the Chapora they call Shahpura.

1510 Albuquerque takes Goa

Afonso de Albuquerque returns in force on 25 November and takes the city: about four and a half centuries of Portuguese rule begin.

1542 Xavier and the churches

Francis Xavier sails in, and the city of churches grows on the Mandovi. Its Bom Jesus keeps his body to this day.

1560 The Inquisition

The Goa Inquisition is set up; it is abolished only in 1812, a hard chapter in Goa's own telling of its past.



1717 Chapora rebuilt

The Portuguese rebuild the fort above our river, with bastions and tunnels to the shore. In 1739 it falls to the Bhonsles, and is taken back two years later.

1961 Operation Vijay

On 19 December the Indian Army moves in, and Goa's Portuguese centuries end within two days.

1967 The Opinion Poll

On 16 January Goans vote to stay their own territory, not to merge with Maharashtra.

1986 A world heritage

The churches and convents of Old Goa join UNESCO's World Heritage list.

1987 Goa, a state

On 30 May Goa becomes India's twenty-fifth state, with Konkani in Devanagari its official language.

Talk like a local

Namaskar

Hello nuh-muh-skaar



Dev borem korum

Thank you (God keep you well) dayv bo-rem ko-room

Dis borem zavonn

Good morning (have a good day) does bo-rem zuh-von

Kaso assa? / Kashe assa?

How are you? (to a man / to a woman) kuh-so us-shu / kuh-shay us-shu

Vhoi / Na

Yes / No vhoi / naa

Udak

Water oo-duck

Nuste

Fish (also masoli) noos-tay

Jevonn

A meal zhay-vun

Yetha

Bye (I'll come again) yay-taa

Susegad

Easy-going, Goa's unhurried way of life soo-say-gaad



Eat like a North Goan

North Goa eats from the river and the sea: fish curry and rice every day, the catch fried in red masala, bread from the village oven, and the market town of Mapusa for everything else. The travellers' cafés are good; the Goan plates are why you came.

36 Joseph Bakery

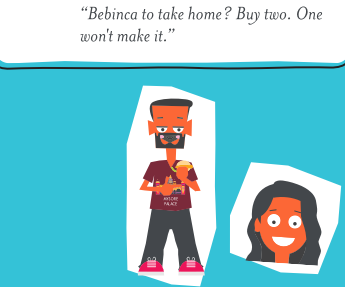
Bread in Khorlim, Mapusa, since 1938: warm poi and plain biscuits, the everyday baking Goa runs on. "Poi, still warm, torn on the way out of the door. That's breakfast in Mapusa."

38 St Peter's Bakery, Mapusa market

In the market's bakery lane: poi and boudes, Goan bread fresh from the oven, and savoury snacks. "Market day starts with bread. Then you can face the fish street."

38 Simonia, Mapusa market

The market's name for bebinca and biscuits: buy a slab of the layered pudding to carry home. "Bebinca to take home? Buy two. One won't make it."



19 Anand Seafood Restaurant

The guides' fish thali between Anjuna and Vagator: rice, curry, fried fish, and a mackerel in red recheado masala. "Fish, curry, rice. Every day. That's not a menu, that's Goa."

33 Spice Goa

People drive to Karaswada for its fish thali: seafood and Goan curries with rice. "Friday: the market first, then a thali. The order matters."

34 Matsya

Crab sukha and a thali built round chonak, the sea perch, near Mapusa's Duler church. "Matsya means fish. Take the hint."

30 This Is It

Goan food at the end of Arambol beach. "Feet in the sand, a fish curry in front of you. This is it, really."

Siolim's evening stalls

An omelette drowned in chicken xacuti gravy, with pão, from a stall in Siolim's evening market. "Goa's own snack: an omelette, a ladle of gravy, a pão to mop it up."

The Tanjore Tiffin Room

Chettinad curries and the coast's seafood, with a Goan chonak curry, in a hundred-year-old house. "Tamil curries in a Goan house. The coast shares its cooking."



17 Gunpowder

Egg appams and a Malabar prawn curry in an Assagao bungalow and garden, in Goa since 2012. "Kerala's coast, cooked in Assagao. Bring friends: it's for sharing."

32 Shimon

Falafel and sabich in Arambol: The Israeli pitta of fried aubergine, egg and salad. "Sabich: aubergine, egg, salad, pitta. Then the beach."

Dishes to hunt down

19 Fish curry rice

The everyday meal: a fish curry with rice, a fried fish on the side. Kingfish, isvonn, is among the fish Goa eats most.

Ros omelette

Ros is Konkani for gravy: an omelette with chicken xacuti poured over, eaten with pão from an evening cart.

36 Poi

Goa's farmhouse bread with an airy crumb, baked in the village bakery and carried round the lanes by the poder.

38 Chourico

The Goan pork sausage, Portugal's chourico made for Goa's damp: cured with vinegar, chilli and spice, sold on strings at Mapusa. Fry it, tuck it into a pão.



19 Recheado

The red masala Goa stuffs into a split mackerel before frying it, made with chillies such as Arambol's own Harmal.

Xacuti

A curry of roasted grated coconut and spices, with chicken or lamb; the gravy on a ros omelette.

Prawn balchão

Prawns in a fiery, sour, pickle-like masala: it keeps, which is the point.

Sol kadhi

A cool drink of coconut milk and kokum, the purple fruit that soups Goan cooking; sipped cool after a hot meal.

38 Bebinca

The layered pudding of coconut milk, egg yolk and sugar, eaten at Christmas, with a Geographical Indication of its own.

Cashew

The Portuguese brought the cashew; Goa's cashew carries its own Geographical Indication. Pernem's coastal belt, round Morjim, usually fruits first, from March.

Khaje

Gram-flour sticks fried and coated in jaggersy and ginger, stacked high on the stalls at every church feast and temple zatra.



Got a day to spare?

46 Panjim and Fontainhas

Goa's capital on the Mandovi: walk the painted Latin quarter of Fontainhas, its tiles and balconies, then the riverfront.

44 Old Goa

The city of churches up the Mandovi: the Basilica of Bom Jesus, the Sé Cathedral and their convents, a World Heritage site.

45 Divar, by ferry

A short ferry from Old Goa's jetty to an island of old churches, Portuguese houses and winding roads.

Chorao's birds

Across the river from Divar, the Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary in the mangroves of Chorao.

Aguada

The fort and its lighthouse at the Mandovi's mouth, above Sinquerim: catch the sunset from the walls.

Dudhsagar

Far inland on the border, the 'sea of milk' pours down the Western Ghats in Bhagwan Mahavir sanctuary; best after the monsoon.

South Goa's quiet beaches

Patnem, Palolem, Agonda and Galgibaga, where the turtles nest too: a long ride south, a slower Goa.

Dolphins, maybe

A boat from the river past the fort to the open sea: dolphins sometimes surface off Morjim, never promised. Life jackets on.

Goa's own bird

Goa's state bird is the flame-throated bulbul, yellow with a red throat, a bird of the Western Ghats' forests; its animal is the gaur, its tree the matti.

Goa's Revolution Day

On 18 June 1946, Ram Manohar Lohia and Julião Menezes defied a Portuguese ban and spoke to a crowd in Margao. Goa still marks 18 June as Revolution Day, Kranti Din.

The fort side: Chapora jetty, the fort, Vagator and the Shiva face

2.3 km · about 3 hours

From Chapora's fishing jetty up to the fort for the view over the river mouth, down to Big Vagator under the cliffs, then over the headland to Ozran's Shiva face, visible at low tide. Real shoes; ride round via Siolim.

10 11 12



Feasts worth timing a trip for

Carnival (February)

Four days before Lent, King Momo rules and float parades roll through Panjim and Mapusa.

Shigmo (spring)

Goa's spring festival dhol and taso drums door to door, folk dances and floats of old stories.

São João (24 June)

In the rains, young men in flower crowns, kopels, leap into wells; at Siolim, decorated boats parade up the river.

The village feasts

Every chapel has its feast day: a mass, a fair of sweets and toys, a brass band. Ask which is next.

The cashew season (spring)

Late February to May the cashew apples ripen, and the village stills make urrak and feni, Goa's own spirit with its GI tag.

Only in North Goa

Taxi on two wheels

Goa's motor-cycle taxis, the pilots, have run on permits since 1981: look for the yellow mudguard and the yellow plate.

Bread by horn

Before breakfast the poder cycles the lanes with his basket of poi and pão, and the village knows him by his horn.



11 A fort from the films

Chapora's fort found a new crowd after a Hindi film shot its friends on the walls.

Wells in June

On São João, in the rains, young men in flower crowns jump into village wells: Goa keeps the feast its own way.

Susegad

The Goan word for taking life easy. Expect long lunches and shut shutters in the afternoon.

4 The turtles' own beach

The High Court ordered quiet nights by Morjim's and Ashwem's nesting beaches.

10 The jetty

Boats unload on the Chapora below Chapora village; the jetty and its auction hall began a long-awaited repair in November 2025.

The monsoon pause

In the monsoon months the trawlers stay in by law while the fish breed; the traditional fishermen's canoes may still go out.

By the bridge

Evenings, sellers lay out the local catch by Siolim bridge; some regulars would rather buy here than in Mapusa.

38 The fish street

Dried fish and the fresh: baby shark, squid, bangda (mackerel).



Isvonn

Kingfish, among the fish Goa eats most; ask for it fried, or in the curry.

19 On the plate

The fish thali: rice, curry, a fried fish, a vegetable.

Goa's own, by law

Harmal chilli

Arambol's own red chilli, grown in its lateritic soil; the heat in a xacuti or recheado masala.

Goa cashew

The kernel, registered in 2023: Goa's cashew is roasted and packed in its own name.

The cashew apple

The fruit itself, the apple the nut hangs from, added in 2026.

38 Bebinca

The layered pudding, Christmas's own, registered by Goa's bakers.

Khaje

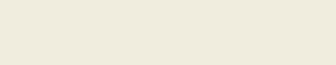
The feast fairs' ginger-and-jaggersy sticks.

38 Moira banana

The red-brown banana from Moira, near Mapusa, on the market's fruit rows.

Mankurad mango

Goa's prized mango, a name of its own.



A market for every day of the week

23 Wednesday: Anjuna

The flea market by the beach, in the season: Kashmiri, Tibetan and Lamani sellers, clothes, jewellery, food stalls.

Wednesday: Arambol

★ QUESTS

Dares for the brave and the curious. The map marks each with a star; tick them off as you go.

★ 3

Count the fenced nests on Morjim. Walk the turtle beach in the nesting season and count the little fences the forest guards put up. Look from outside. Never touch.

★ 5

Cross the Chapora and climb the fort. Over the Siolim bridge to Chapora, then up the red path to the walls: Morjim, where you sleep, is across the river below.

★ 40

Find the lake behind the beach. Walk north from Arambol's beach round the rocks: a freshwater lake waits behind the dunes, fed by a stream from the hill.

★ 19

Eat fish curry like a local. The everyday meal, at a small local place, at lunch, with a fried fish on the side.

★ 41

Hike Arambol's hill for a local. The everyday meal, at a small local place, at lunch, with a fried fish on the side.

10 The fishing boats' end of the river

Chapora fishing jetty. Below Chapora village the travellers raft together, nets dry and the catch comes in at the auction shed. The sandbank keeps boats in for months after the monsoon. Come in the morning, stand clear of the ropes, ask before photographs.

11 The red fort on the river mouth

Chapora fort. Laterite walls over the river mouth: on an Adil Shahi fort's site ('Shahpura'), Portuguese from the 1610s, rebuilt in 1717, abandoned in 1892. Inside, stones and cashew bushes; outside, Morjim and Vagator. Oil Chaitra Hai's wall. Steep path: come for sunset.

12 Dark rocks, red cliffs, two beaches

Vagator beach. Two beaches split by a headland: Big Vagator under the fort, Little Vagator (Ozran) beyond. Dark rocks at the waterline, red laterite cliffs behind, sunset from the headland. The paths down are steep: real shoes, not flip-flops.

13 Where the Chapora meets the sea

The mouth of the Chapora. The Chapora splits North Goa: Morjim and Pernem north, from the fort and Vagator south. From Morjim's spit the fort sits across the water. A sandbank builds here each year. Dolphins sometimes, never promised. Strong current: no swimming.

48 Five minutes across to the last fort

The Querim to Tiracol ferry. Goa's ferries carry people, scooters and cars where bridges never came. Querim to Tiracol is the northernmost: a bridge begun in 2014 is not open yet, so the ferry still takes you to the fort. Check crossings at the jetty.

NUSTE, PLEASE

9 Vagator's vegan courtyard

Bean Me Up. Vegan in a plant-filled courtyard on the Ozran Beach Road, Vagator: ab'vagan since 2015. Vegan pizzas, tofu curries, big salads, ice creams. Order one thing you've never heard of.

27 Chia bowls on the surf beach

Prana Cafe. On Ashwem's surf beach, at the entrance of Vaia, across from the Holy Cross chapel. Chia bowls and zucchini quinoa fritters: smoothies and coffee too. Breakfast after the early surf, salt still in your hair.

30 Goan plates at Arambol's north end

This is it. At the top end of Arambol beach, on the way to the sweet-water lake: Goan food. The menu runs wide, Indian to momos, but stay Goan: fish curry, rice, a fry of the day's catch.

36 Bread in Khorlim since 1938

Joseph Bakery, Khorlim. A bread shop in Khorlim opened in 1938 by Jose Simplicio Braganza, renamed after liberation, kept by the family since. Fresh bread and plain biscuits. Buy warm pol for the road.

FLEA MARKET MORNINGS

21 Saturdays, after dark, in Arpora

Arpora's Saturday night market. Saturdays in the season, Arpora's night market fills its fields: clothes, handicrafts, food from half the world. Begun in 1999 by the Baga river. Go early, before the bridge traffic.

FEASTS, SHIGMO AND SONG

1 The village church up our lane

Our Lady of Miracles, Morjim. Morjim's parish church, a few minutes from the hostel, is Our Lady of Miracles, the same Milagres whose feast fills Mapusa. The parish dates from 1903; its feast is the second Sunday of May. Step in between services.

2 Morjim's goddess, one of seven sisters

Shri Morjai temple, Morjim. Morjim's own goddess, Morjai, one of the seven sister goddesses of Goan lore. The old shrine was rebuilt about a century ago, its hall in 1936; look for kaavi, red-earth sgraffito, on the walls. Shoes off at the door.

15 The chapel with the May bride

Mae de Deus chapel, Siolim. On the plot of Siolim's first church, the ward's Mother of God chapel: first built in 1847, the present one blessed in 1972. On the first Sunday of May a girl dressed as a bride, with flower girls, walks in its procession.

16 The saint who caught the snake

St Anthony's church, Siolim. Siolim's white church on the creek: first finished in 1630, the present one consecrated in 1907. Legend says St Anthony's statue caught a snake that kept stopping the builders, so here he holds a serpent. São João's boats end here in June.

39 The guardian of the market town

Shri Dev Badgeswar temple, Mapusa. Among the fields on Mapusa's edge, the shrine of Mapusa's guardian, credited with the market town's luck. Its five-day zatra in December or January fills the field with a fair and lights. Shoes off.

44 Goa's old capital, a World Heritage site

Old Goa: Bom Jesus and the Se. The capital of Portuguese Asia, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site (1986): Bom Jesus (1605), with St Francis Xavier's remains in a silver casket, and the vast Se Cathedral across the lawns. Walk church to church; dress modestly.

18 Old houses, new cafés, a 1775 chapel

Assagao and St Cajetan's chapel. In the green hills between Anjuna and Mapusa: Portuguese-era houses with their balconies, studios and cafés, and St Cajetan's, a chapel from 1775 tied to the Anjuna parish. Narrow lanes where people live: ride slowly.

20 Anjuna's parish church since the 1590s

St Michael's church, Anjuna. Anjuna's parish of St Michael dates to the 1590s; the first church was built in 1603, a stronger one in the 1700s. Its feasts are 29 September and the second week of January. Visit between services, dressed modestly.

46 The capital's colour-washed Latin quarter

Panjim and Fontainhas. Panjim's oldest quarter, from the early 1800s: lanes of houses washed blue, yellow, ochre and brick-red, tiled roofs, balcony porches, between Altinho hill and the Ourem creek. Walk it early, when the bread round is on.

STAYED FOR THE SUNSETS

29 Bring a drum, or just your ears

The sunset drum circle, Arambol. Every evening in season, a drum circle forms on Arambol's beach as the sun drops: djembes, handmade drums, shakers, passed hand to hand. Sit in, play or listen. Keep your things close; walk home by the village road.

29 Join the sunset drums at Arambol. At sunset drummers gather on Arambol's sand. Bring nothing but your hands.

14 Stand up on a board at Ashwem. Surf near Mandrem and Ashwem: take a lesson in the season, when the sea is calm.

4 Watch the kitesurfers off Morjim. Morjim's shallow, wide beach draws kitesurfers: watch from the sand on a windy afternoon, away from the nests.

23 Bargain at the Wednesday flea market. Anjuna's market opens on Wednesdays only, by the sea. Smile, offer half, settle in the middle.

38 Smell the chourico at Mapusa on a Friday. Friday is the big day at Mapusa's market: sausages on strings, cashews, kokum and pottory.

8 Kayak through the Chapora's mangroves. Paddle up the river by kayak, among the mangroves on its banks.

42 Find Goa's northernmost beach. Querim, lined with casuarinas, is where Goa's sand ends: Tiracol's fort sits across the river.

24 Rocky shore, wide sky, old soul

Anjuna beach. Rocks and small coves, a travellers' village for the season, the Wednesday flea market at its south end. Explore the rocks at low tide, carefully. Swim only where the life-guards watch.

25 A face in the rock, at low tide

The Shiva face, Ozran beach. At Ozran's far end a face of Shiva is carved into a boulder at the tideline, by a sculptor nobody can name. The sea covers it at high tide: come when it's out. Worshipped on Mahashivratri; don't climb on it.

22 A garden, a bakery and a shop

Artjuna Cafe. A garden café round an old Goan house in Anjuna: Israeli and Middle Eastern plates, all-day breakfasts, coffee, its own bakery and a shop. Sit out a hot afternoon before the Wednesday market.

34 Crab and chonak in Mapusa

Matsya. Matsya means fish: Goan seafood near the Duler church. Try the crab sukha or a chonak thali. A sit-down lunch after the market; ask what came in that morning.

35 Where Hindus and Catholics share a feast

St Jerome's (Milagres) church, Mapusa. Founded in 1594, famous for the feast of Our Lady of Miracles a few weeks after Easter, when Hindus come in thousands too: local belief makes her a sister of the goddess Lalai, and oil and flowers pass between the two shrines.

37 North Goa's bus hub, for pocket change

Mapusa bus stand. North Goa's bus hub: Zostel's own directions run from here to Morjim, a short walk from the hostel; buses also go to Arambol, Siolim, Anjuna and Panjim. Say your stop to the conductor; carry small change.

48 Take the ferry to Tiracol's fort. Over the Tiracol river from Querim to the fort at Goa's very top, where the state meets Maharashtra.

38 Count the layers of a bebinca. Goa's layered pudding of coconut milk, egg yolk and sugar is baked a layer at a time. Count, then eat.

12 Watch the sun drop off Vagator's red cliffs. From the cliff top above Vagator, the Arabian Sea goes orange, then grey.

4 Do one whole afternoon susegad. A hammock, the shade of a palm, no plan. That is the Goan way of it.

40 Fresh water, a sand strip from the sea

The sweet-water lake, Arambol. North over the rocks from Arambol, a freshwater lake sits behind Kalcha beach, a thin strip of sand from the sea. Swim or float. No lifeguards. A huge banyan up the valley. No soap, no litter.

42 Goa's last beach going north

Querim (Ker) beach. Goa's northernmost beach: long sand at the Tiracol river's mouth, rocky outcrops, rows of trees and protected dunes. Few shacks, lots of room. Tiracol fort and Maharashtra across the water, the ferry crosses here. Mind the river current.

