West Bengal is a confluence of a rich past, diverse geography, architectural grandeur and culture. The cultural repertoire of Bengal is not limited to the Durga Puja or Chau dance of Purulia; we take pride in hosting the world renowned Kolkata Book Fair as well as the spring festival of Santiniketan; our craft displays the Bankura terracotta to the Wooden masks of Dakshin Dinajpur; we groove to the mystic sounds of the Bauls and Fakirs as well as hum along subtle songs of Tagore.
...........experience the serenity of Natungram

Vibrant colours, intricate designs and ethnic style, are the characteristic features of the traditional wooden dolls made by 70 households of artists in Natungram village of Bardhaman district. The dolls are carved from one piece of cylindrical wood. Men do the carving and the women paint and finish the products. The owl, with its unique design and colours, is the brand product of Natungram. On the white background of the owl is painted a distinctive design of red, green, yellow and black lines. Apart from the traditional Owls, Krishna-Radha and King-Queen dolls artists are also making a range of diversified products like furniture, lamps, jewellery etc.

Department of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises & Textiles (MSME&T), Government of West Bengal, in partnership with UNESCO, has developed Rural Craft Hub at Natungram.

How to reach

Nearest railway station is Agradwip or Katwa. It is about 1.5 hours drive from Bardhaman or Santiniketan and takes 4 hours from Kolkata.

Where to stay

One can enjoy stay at the Community Resource Centre with well furnished lodging facilities along with basic amenities that are available for the guests. There are hotels in Katwa town too.

Things to do around Natungram

- Watch the artists at work. Learn the stories about their craft and also learn the craft making.
- Witness the wooden craft excellence at the Community Museum.
- Visit the Katiya Baba ashram.
- Stroll along the Bhagirathi River.
- Relax on the bank of Nimbarka Sarovar and visit nearby temples in Agradweep, Nabadwip and Katwa.

Special attraction

A 3 day village fair along with a folk festival will be held at Natungram on January 20-22, 2017, promoting community led heritage tourism.
unravel the cool weaves of the North

The former princely state of Cooch Behar, once ruled by the Koch dynasty is the abode of Sitalpati (cool mat weavers). Over 14000 families have kept this traditional art alive. These weavers engage in the lengthy process of slicing, weaving and processing the cane. A simple natural color variation of brown and white along with the weaver’s creative patterns bring about the most intricately simple yet unique designs.

Department of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises & Textiles (MSME&T), Government of West Bengal, in partnership with UNESCO has developed Rural Craft Hub at Ghughumari.

How to reach

Nearest railway station is New Cooch Behar. Ghughumari is about 14 kms by road from the station.

Where to stay

• Artists Resource Centre has well furnished guest rooms along with basic amenities available for the guests. One can also stay at hotels in Cooch Behar.

Things to do around Ghughumari

• Exploring the Community Museum is a must.

• In Cooch Behar town, one must explore the Royal Palace, Madan Mohan Temple.

• A visit to the picturesque Alipurduar with major tourist attractions like Jaldapara National Park, Buxa Tiger Reserve in its vicinity is a must. Tea connoisseurs may take note of this place’s famous Dooars tea. It has been a popular haunt for nature lovers and wild life enthusiasts. It is also the home of vibrant culture of North Bengal.

• Bhawaiya music: There are about 3000 Bhawaiya artists in Cooch Behar and Alipurduar.

Special attraction

A 3 day village fair along with folk festival will be held on January 20 – 22, 2017.
Tepantar village at Satkahania in Bardhaman district is the abode of a community of theatre practitioners. The members specialise in music, drama, martial arts, sound and design. They experiment with art and theatre while also doing poultry farming, fishing and vegetable farming for resource generation. Tepantar was established in 1996 by Kallol Bhattacharya - a theatre activist. Theatre performances and folk dances are a part of daily routine here. Most of the members stay within the campus of 4 acres of serene greenery. There is an open air stage and space for rehearsals and workshops.

**How to reach**

Nearest railway station is Panagarh. Tepantar is a half an hour drive from Panagarh, an hour from Santiniketan and 3.5 hours drive from Kalkata.

**Where to stay**

One can stay at the beautiful well furnished cottages within the premises of Tepantar.

**Things to do around Tepantar**

- Marvel at the Ichai Deul, a 70 feet tall temple built by Ichai Ghosh, which is 7 kms from Tepantar.
- Enjoy the quietness of the surrounding forests that provide a perfect backdrop for the winding Ajay river. Visit the 600 years old temple of Shyam Rupa.
- Listen to the soulful Baul music at Joydeb Temple at Kenduli.

**Special attraction**

A 3 day village fair along with folk festival will be held on November 25 – 27, 2016.
............ explore the creativity of the potter's wheel

Baked in sun and burnt in mud kilns with dry eucalyptus leaves, the earthy ensembles in dull ochre or red are beauteous caricatures. Terracotta of Bankura is one of the first attempts of man at clay modeling and has perfected with time. The simple yet dynamic terracotta artistry of Panchmura in Bankura has its origin in a religious ritual. The structure of the 'Bankura Horse' has been so fashioned as to symbolize a mark of devotion and valor. It stands on its four legs with the neck held high and the ears and the tail erect and straight. Around 70 families of potters live at Panchmura. Terracotta artwork of Panchmura is a fine example of simple yet dynamic artistry, having a range of products starting from animal to human figurines along with household utility and décor products.

Department of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises & Textiles (MSME&T), Govt. of West Bengal, in partnership with UNESCO, has developed rural craft hub at Panchmura.

How to reach

Train from Howrah to Bishnupur or Bankura takes about 3 hours. Panchmura is 23 kms from Bishnupur. From Kolkata it is about a 4 hours drive.

Where to stay

· WBTDC lodge in Bishnupur with 29 well furnished rooms. Many hotels and lodges are available at Bankura town. One can also stay at Panchmura Resource Centre.

Things to do around Panchmura

· Visit the Community Resource Centre at Panchmura to witness the crafts on display. Visit artist's houses to see their work. Participate in workshops to learn their craft. Learn the history of the craft and stories of the associated rituals.

· Bishnupur, famous for its 16 terracotta temples built by the Malla kings dedicated to Lord Krishna is just a 30 mins drive.

· Mukutmanipur Dam at the confluence of rivers Kangshabati and Kumari is a popular destination for its scenic beauty.

Special attraction

Terracotta artists of Panchmura will hold their 3 day village fair along with their folk festival on November 4 – 6, 2016.
Bikna in Bankura district is the home of around 65 families who traditionally make exquisite Dakra items. This tribal art uses an ancient technique of production of non-ferrous metal ware by the lost wax casting (cire perdue) process. The craft characterised by primitive simplicity, rustic beauty and imaginative designs and patterns is a coveted collector’s item.

Department of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises & Textiles (MSME&T), Government of West Bengal, in partnership with UNESCO, has developed Rural Craft Hub at Bikna.

**How to reach**
Nearest railway station is Bankura. It is about 4.5 hours drive from Kalkata. Bikna is 1.5 minutes from Bankura railway station.

**Where to stay**
One can enjoy stay at the Community Resource Centre with well furnished lodging facilities along with basic amenities available for the guests. There are hotels in Bankura town too.

**Things to do around Bikna**
- Enjoy a sneak peek into the lives of the creators of the exquisite pieces with a one on one interaction. Experience the craft making process.
- Witness the master pieces at the Community Museum.
- Susunia Hills and Kenjakura are within 45 minutes, Susunia is a trekker’s paradise and Kenjakura is a Handicraft village, consisting of Bel Mala, Tant, Brass Metal, Wooden work.
- Terracotta temples of Bishnupur is also one hour away.

**Special attraction**
A 3 day village fair along with a folk festival will be held at Bikna on 30 September - 2 October, 2016 promoting community led heritage tourism.
........experience the exuberance of folk songs & dance amidst calm serenity

Far from the maddening crowd enchanting Purulia beckons to experience her living heritages and calm serenity and calls to unravel her untapped mystery and wondrous beauty. This western most district of the state of West Bengal is a part of the Chhoto Nagpur plateau. Many of its tribes still retain their distinct identities and their traditional, cultural and religious practices. The people of this area practice myriad festivals all throughout the year and each festival is unique in its essence. The traditional folks of Purulia are Chau dance, Jhumur songs and dance, Pata dance which are rich and vibrant and have a global appeal. Among these, Chau dance has been inscribed in UNESCO Representative list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

**How to reach**

From Bamnia, the nearest railway station is Purulia. From Chelyama, the nearest railway station is Adra. It is a 6 hours drive from Kolkata.

**Things to do around Bamnia and Chelyama**

- Visit the ruins of 8th century temples at Deulghata on the banks of river Kansai from Bamnia.
- Go for a day trip to the scenic Murguma Dam.
- Visit the temples at Telkupi, Bandhar Deul (6th century Jain Temple) and Radha Binod temples from Chelyama.
- Climb the rocks at the Joychandi hills.

**Special attraction**

The 6th edition of the annual Chau Jhumur festival is scheduled to be held at Bamnia on December 22-28, 2016.
Charida

........decipher the brilliance of Chau masks

Purulia is culturally the richest district in West Bengal. Snuggled in its corner is Charida, the village of 300 skilled mask makers of the celebrated dance form of the region, Chau. This quaint village in the land of red soil is located at the scenic foothills of Ajodhya hills, about 5 kms from Bagmundi and 29 kms from Balarampur.

Department of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises & Textiles (MSME&T), Govt of West Bengal in partnership with UNESCO has developed Rural Craft Hub in Charida.

How to reach
Nearest railway station is Barabhum or Purulia. It is about 6 hours drive from Kolkata.

Where to stay
One can stay at hotels in Purulia/ Ayodhya or at lodges in Charida or at Gandhi Ashram in Nimdih.

Things to do around Charida
- The skilled mask makers of Chau allow you to learn about their art in personal workshops conducted by them where one can learn about the enchanting mask making techniques directly from the masters themselves.
- Ayodhya Hill is nearby.
- Enjoy the panoramic view from the PPSP dam. Visit the adjacent Lahariya Shiv Temple.
- Visit the Gandhi Ashram at Nimdih, the 1948 Loksevayatan institute established is enshrined in the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. The simplicity of life and quietude of nature can be felt right after entering the ashram.

Special attraction
A 3 day village fair along with folk festival will be held at Charida on December 16-18, 2016 promoting community led heritage tourism.
......be fascinated by the awe inspiring masks
The ecstatic wooden masks of Kushmandi in Dakshin Dinajpur district is associated with the Rajbangshi community of the area. Around 150 artists are engaged into making wooden masks and 60 families into Bamboo based work. The wood is generally sourced from the Gamar trees. These masks are part of the costume of the traditional Gomira dancers who perform it during Chandi Puja. Themes of the masks are generally spiritual, historic and religious.

Department of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises & Textiles (MSME&T), Government of West Bengal, in partnership with UNESCO has developed Rural Craft Hub at Kushmandi.

How to reach
Nearest railway station is Kaliagunj. Kushmandi is a 2 hours drive from Malda.

Where to stay
• Artists Resource Centre has well furnished guest rooms along with basic amenities available for the guests. One can also stay at hotels in Kaliagunj.

Things to do around Kushmandi
• Explore the Community Museum to marvel at the artistry. Participate in workshop to learn the craft and its history and associated stories.
• Visit Dhokra artists and see how they do weaving.
• Tread into the past as you visit the ruins of ‘Neelkothi’.
• Kulik Bird Sanctuary, a bird watchers delight, is 3.5 kms away.

Special attraction
Artists of Kushmandi will celebrate their 3 day village fair along with folk festival on October 21 - 23, 2016.
....retreat into a world of colours

Pingla is situated in Paschim Medinipur district. Patachitra and Pater Gaan are unique cultural traditions of Bengal. There are 250 Patachitra painters or ‘Patuas’ living in Naya village in Pingla. The Patuas paint stories in a series of frames on long scrolls of cloth with natural colours. They also make apparel, stationery items & home décor products with Patachitra motifs.

Department of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises & Textiles (MSME&T), Govt of West Bengal, in partnership with UNESCO has developed Rural Craft Hub in Pingla.

How to reach

Pingla is 3 hours drive from Kolkata. Nearest railway station is at Balichak, 30 minutes drive from Pingla.

Where to stay

One can enjoy stay at the Community Resource Centre with well furnished lodging facilities along with basic amenities available for the guests. One can also stay at guest houses in Pingla, hotels in Balichak or at artist’s houses at Pingla.

Things to do around Pingla

- Plan a day visit to Naya, Pingla. Take a village tour to see the beautifully painted walls, the colour trail. Participate in workshops to learn how to make natural colours and paints.
- Visit the Community Resource Center to witness the rare vintage scrolls as well as the wide range of diversified products made by the artists like T-shirts, hand fans, lamps, bags, umbrellas etc.
- Visit the mat weavers at Sabang or Pingla.

Special attraction

The Patachitra artists will celebrate the 7th edition of their village festival ‘POT Maya’ on November 11-13, 2016. This is a unique opportunity to witness the entire village transform into an art gallery.
........weave your dreams with women making Kantha

Kantha for the Bengali folks means embroidered quilt. Kantha is said to be 'Dorukha' meaning turning the worn out and old textiles and fabrics to things of beauty. It is the way the stitch is used, in different arrangements, that form the complex vocabulary of Kantha. A Kantha is often referred to as a rural woman's diary. Kantha embroidery has led to socio-economic empowerment of thousands of women at Birbhum.

Department of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises & Textiles (MSME&T), Government of West Bengal, in partnership with UNESCO has developed Rural Craft Hub at Nanoor.

**How to reach**

If you are in Santiniketan, go for a day visit to Nanoor.

**Where to stay**

- WBTDC lodge in Bolpur with 39 well furnished rooms. There are many hotels, resorts, lodges and guest houses operational in Bolpur, Santiniketan.

**Special attraction**

Kantha artists of Nanoor will celebrate a 3 day village fair along with folk festival on October 14 – 16, 2016.
remould your soul with artisans of Ghurni

Adjacent to river Jalongi is the picturesque village Ghurni in Nadia district. It is the hub of more than 500 artists who make clay dolls. An integral part of Bengal's culture. The clay dolls of Ghurni are famous for their perfect detailing of form, feature and stance, the meticulous realism of the clothes to the last fold and tuck, and the marvelous expressions making them a collector's item.

Department of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises & Textiles (MSME&T), Government of West Bengal, in partnership with UNESCO has developed Rural Craft Hub at Ghurni.

How to reach

Krishnanagar is the nearest railway station. Ghurni is about 3 kms drive from the station. If you are visiting Nadia, go for a daytime tour to Ghurni to meet the clay doll artists.

Where to stay

• There are a number of hotels in Krishnanagar.
Bhetiyali: Bhetiyali music is inspired by the confluence of nature and life. It is the music of mystic rivers and the lives of boatmen. Bhetiyali songs are performed with a touch of sadness in the memory of one’s beloved. They express the pure and deep love for a beloved through simple language. The boatmen also hum songs of leisure and peace, performed while comfortably rowing downstream. The songs gained popularity in the Mymensingh and Syderi districts of Bengal (now in Bangladesh), as well as in the Sunderban area. These songs are performed solo and in chorus.

Bhawaiya: Bhawaiya, a genre of North Bengal folk music, is performed primarily in the Rajshahi dialect of Bengal. Bhawaiya folk songs reflect the experiences of rural life - occupations, joys, sorrows and harmony with nature. The songs are about relationships between men and women, spirituality, desire for affection, pain of lost love, destitution, desire for pre-marital meetings, sufferings of early widowhood and splinterhood. Rural livelihoods and nature, especially birds and rivers, provide themes for the Bhawaiya songs.

Baul Fakir: The Bauls are minstrels whose song and dance reflect the joy, love and longing for mystical union with the Divine. The Bauls believe that one can free oneself from earthly attachments through their philosophy. Murshid or Guru is the steersman who takes the devotee to God; respecting, following the path and total belief in Murshid does not have any other alternative. They propound detachment from earthly bonds or ties. They reject division of caste, creed, religion etc. Baul music has different doctrines forming the basis of the songs. The theories which inspired the Baul philosophy are Atmatattwa, Dehatattwa, Gurutattwa, Paramatattwa, Prem, Bhitkuttattwa, Sadhanatattwa, Nabitattwa, Gouratattwa, Srijhittattwa.

Bangla Qawwali: Bangla Qawwali is a wonderful example of the journey of a music genre through different countries. Qawwali forms are a part of mainstream Sufi music. Sufism entered India from the west in the 12th century. Originating in Greater Persia, Iran, Kherson and Baghdad, the Qawwali tradition gained a new identity in Bengal at the shrines of Muslim saints. In Bengal the Qawwali songs synthesized with the philosophy and music of various other traditions, such as Vaiśnavism, Baul and Baul songs, to produce a new genre of Qawwali called Bangla Qawwali which retained the Sufi idioms of Sīlīsī (teachings of Sufi masters), Sama (listening to music and chanting to induce mystical trance), and Fana (annihilation of the ego).

Kirtan: The Sanskrit word ‘Kirtan’ means glorification or praise. Sheer passion, devotion and longing for God and getting acquainted with the mass, all these are integral part of Kirtan. There are mainly two types of Kirtan. One is Padabali Kirtan of Baishnav Mahajan and Rasa Kirtan and the other is Loukik Kirtan. It takes hours of practice to sing the Padabali Kirtan properly. Loukik Kirtan is basically folk song because it has a universal appeal. A prominent part of Bhakti movement in Bengal, Chaitanya Dev used Kirtan to spread his message of love to motivate people to fight for their social right.

Jhumur: Jhumur is the lifestyle music and dance of Purulia and Bankura. This folk music form dates back to being older than the Vaishnav Padabali. Jhumur songs and dances are an integral part of local community Parba (festivals) and rituals like Badana, Tusu, Karam Puja and special occasions like marriage, harvests etc. Jhumur songs are songs of everyday life and widely accepted among all cross sections of the society.

Chau: ‘Chau’ is a vigorous form of marital dance and drama popular in the Chotanagpur plateau area of Eastern India. There are more than 200 Chau groups in Purulia. Elaborate masks, dazzling costumes, rhythmic drum beatings, powerful acrobatic movements and somersaults in the air make the dance a marvel to watch. Traditional Chau dance was based on stories from Indian epics and mythology and depicts movements of demons, Gods and different animals and is also inspired by the rhythms of nature. The dance is performed during various tribal rituals and ceremonies. In 2010, Chau got inscribed in UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Gobhir & Domni: Gobhir & Domni, two very popular folk drama forms of Maldia district describe the problems of day to day living through dance, music and humour.

Note: For information on Bengal’s Folk Music

Website: www.banglanatak.com
Email: music@banglanatak.com
Tel: +91-33-24178516 / 24178518
Baitanik, the residence of Saumyendranath Tagore, nephew of Rabindranath Tagore, is a heritage building, located at the heart of Kolkata. Since 2011, we @ banglanatak dot com have developed the courtyard of this building as an open cultural space and hold weekend musical programmes. 160 programmes have been held so far. We regularly organize International cultural collaborations here and the space is now a destination for the music lovers and the tourists.
Sur Jahan (previous name: Sufi Sutra) is a world peace music festival held at Kolkata annually. 6 International teams and local/National teams participate in 3 days festival with day time workshop & evening concert. The 7th edition of the festival will be held at Kolkata on February 3-5 and in Goa on February 8-10, 2017.

Teams participated so far:

International Teams participated so far:
- Afghanistan
- Azerbaijan
- Bangladesh
- Brazil
- Burkina Faso
- Denmark
- Egypt
- Hungary
- Iran
- Morocco
- Portugal
- Russia
- Scotland
- Spain
- Syria
- Sweden
- Tajikistan
- Tunisia
- UK
- USA

National Teams:
- Andhra Pradesh
- Bihar
- Delhi
- Gujarat
- Kashmir
- Punjab
- Rajasthan
- Uttar Pradesh
- West Bengal
Cultural Tourism in West Bengal
Bankura is a land of diverse ethnic culture, dense forest, beautiful hills and historic Terracotta temples.

Bikna, located near Bankura station, is known for its Dokra art. The tribal art of Dokra is one of the ancient processes of producing non-ferrous metal ware by the lost wax casting. The imaginative designs and patterns are something that will amaze the tourists. Bikna is a place that can also be visited to observe the process of Dokra and collect souvenir.

Bankura has many hotels. One can also stay at guest rooms at Bikna Dokra Resource Center.

Bankura town to Bishnupur is an hour's drive. If you are an admirer of rich architecture then you must visit the splendid terracotta temples.

Visitors can plan a trip to Panchmura, an hour away from Bishnupur. The tradition of terracotta craft making is believed to have originated from Panchmura region. It is a village of about 270 terracotta artists. The place is famous for its iconic long-necked terracotta horses. The products range from animal and human figurines to household utility items, a wonderful place for a home-maker or people who like to decorate their home with beautiful artifacts.

One can stay at WBTDC lodge in Bishnupur with 29 well furnished rooms. Tourists can also stay at hotels in Bankura. Terracotta artists in Panchmura have a resource center, which also has guest rooms with provision of simple hygienic stay along with hot Indian cooked food.

Mukutmanipur, a nearby tourist attraction is a water reservoir located at the scenic confluence of rivers Kangshabati and Kumari.

One can collect the unique Dashavatara playing cards, a speciality of the Faujdar family at Bishnupur.
Trail 3

Cooch Behar, Alipurduar

The diverse lifestyles of royal family, Rajbangshis and tribal communities, makes Cooch Behar-Alipurduar a place where contrasts co-exist. Coochbehar is worth visiting to see the Royal Palace, the magnificent Madan Mohan Temple and nearby Chilapata forest (in Alipurduar) and the rivers.

If you visit Cooch Behar town, Ghughumari which is 20 minutes away, is a place which you shouldn't miss. There are over 3000 people involved with Sitalpati mat weaving. 'Sitalpati' means cool mat. They are luxurious, comfortable and utilitarian. They are crafted from green cane slips of Maranta Dichotoma or Murthra Reed. There is an associated interesting folklore with this craft related to Lord Krishna and his beloved Radha. As frequently mentioned by the craft persons, the best kind of Pati are so smooth that even a snake cannot glide over it.

A visit to the picturesque Alipurduar with major tourist attractions like Jaldapara National Park, Buxa Tiger Reserve in its vicinity is a must. Tea connoisseurs may take note of this place's famous Dooars tea. It has been a popular haunt for nature lovers and wildlife enthusiasts. It is also the home of vibrant culture of North Bengal.

Both Alipurduar and Coochbehar have good hotels. One can also stay at guest rooms at Ghughumari Resource Centre which has well furnished rooms with basic amenities available for the guests.
Tourists can visit the historical Malda, a place famous for an array of beautiful monuments and mosques. Places like Gaur, Adina or Buddhist architecture and sculptures in Jagjibanpur can make interesting tour itinerary.

Tourists may plan an additional day at Malda to visit Kushmundi, which is about 2 hours away.

Kushmundi is famous for its wooden mask makers. Around 150 craft people live in this area. The craft of Gomira mask making is ecstatic and beautiful and worth a visit to know more about this particular craft. There are also 60 families involved with bamboo craft which is equally fascinating. Crafts person make decorative and utility items as well. There are 1000 artists making Dhokra.

Raigunj Bird Sanctuary at Kulik, Mahipaldighi lake and Raigunj Haat may be other interesting areas located within 2 hours’ radius from Kushmandi.

One can stay at WBTDC lodge in Malda or at Raigunj. Tourists visiting Kushmandi can also stay at hotels in Kaliyagunj. Wooden Mask artists in Kushmandi have a resource center at Mahishbatihan, which also has well furnished guest rooms with provision of simple hygienic stay along with hot cooked Indian food.
Nadia, the land of Sri Chaitanya, rich in music is situated at the heart of West Bengal.

From Kolkata to Krishnanagar it takes 2.5 hours to reach by train.

Ghurni is 10 mins away from Krishnanagar. Ghurni is the hub where more than 1000 artists make clay dolls. The crafts person shape the humble clay into miniature human figures at work. The perfect detailing of forms, features and stance, the meticulous realism of clothes to the last fold and tuck and the marvelous expression make each doll a collector's item. Spend the day time; experience the making of these beautiful, lively clay structures which are adorned with vibrant colors.

You may start your day at the Krishnanagar Rajbari. The Rajbari Palace built here during the reign of Raja Krishna Chandra Rai is a prominent place of tourist attraction, though the remnants of the past glory have eroded, only a dilapidated structure of the exquisite palaces with carving on its inner walls exists today. Brahma Mandir, established in 1847 by Debendranath Tagore, is an added attraction. If you are a connoisseur of beautiful architectural designs then Krishnanagar College is a place you must visit, dating back to 1846, it has a public library which was built a decade later. Both are now heritage buildings, wonderful examples of Indo-European architecture. Krishnanagar is also famous for mouth-watering sweets like 'sarbhaja' and 'sarpuria'.

It is worth planning a visit to the legendary weavers of Phulia and Santipur to see the traditional weaves of Bengal. From Krishnanagar, Phulia is about 50 minutes away and Santipur is 30 minutes away.

Ample choices of accommodation are available at Krishnanagar town. One can also visit Gorbanga, Fakir village and stay at the well furnished guest rooms at their resource center, with provision of simple hygienic stay along with hot cooked Indian food. Home stay is also available at Gorbanga.
Birbhum, Bardhaman

Santiniketan, the university town created by the greatest poet and thinker of Bengal, Rabindranath Tagore, the first non-European Nobel laureate, is a popular destination for heritage tourism. Poush Mela around Christmas time and Dol Utsav are well known festivals here.

Visitors at Santiniketan may visit Nanoor which is an hour away, to see 3000 women at work with their beautiful and intriguing Kantha embroidery.

From Santiniketan, you can also go to Natungram, about 2 hours away from Katwa. Natungram is famous for their wooden dolls, especially their iconic owls. The owl, with its unique design and colors is the brand product of the village along with Radha-Krishna and King-Queen dolls. Tourists will be awestruck with the brilliant combination of pure simplicity, glamour and master craftsmanship.

One can also visit Tepantar, theatre village located at Satkhania, next to Ajay River, which is an hour away from Santiniketan towards Darjeeling More. Close to Tepantar, on the other side of Ajay River, is the Joydev Temple of Kenduli which hosts the biggest Baul Mela during Makar Sankranti.

While returning from Santiniketan, one may also like to halt at Dariyapur near Guskara to pay a visit to the Dokra village.

One can stay at WBTDC lodge in Bolpur with 39 well furnished rooms. Tourists can also stay at the beautiful well furnished cottages within Tepantar premises amidst nature's bounty. In Natungram, one can stay at Guest Rooms at their Resource Center also.
Pingla is the place of the Patachitra artists known for their unique tradition of stories that they paint on long scrolls of cloth with natural colours and narrate the stories through songs as they unfurl the scroll painting frame by frame. There are 250 Patuas in this village.

Tourists will love to discover the skills of making natural colours from different local vegetables, fruits and flowers. People with love for painting and vibrant colors can also try learning the skills of making Patachitra with natural colours. One may also paint their own Patachitra in T-shirts, hand fan, sarees, dress materials, wooden work, mugs etc and carry it home as a memento that is going to stay forever. One may like to take a stroll around the village meeting Patachitra artists and enjoying the beautiful wall murals.

Tourists may plan a day trip to Pingla, which is 3 hours by road from Kolkata. Patachitra artists in Pingla have a resource center, which also has well furnished guest rooms with provision of simple hygienic stay along with hot cooked Indian food.
Purulia, in the westernmost region of the state, is a pied panorama of nature, people, culture and heritage. The natural attractions of Purulia include hills and flat green agricultural lands, laterite soil transected with rivers and bordered by hills and mountains.

Purulia is 6 hours from Kolkata, 2 hours from Jamshedpur and Ranchi. Frequent trains are available from Kolkata. Tourists can also go by road.

Tourists may make a halt at Adra to visit Kashipur Palace, Jaychandi Hills, Telkupi, Bandhar Deul (8th century Jain temple). They can also visit Chelyama’s Chau Jhumur Resource Centre. Purulia town is about an hour’s journey by rail / road from Adra.

From Purulia town, tourists can take the Ranchi Road to reach Deulghata, about 45 minutes drive to see the 6th century temple at the bank of Kansai river. Bamnia is a nearby spot at about 30 minutes distance with the Chau Resource Centre. A direct road from Jhalda to Baghmundi is worth an hour’s drive, if you want to enjoy the scenic beauty and fantastic landscape.

You can also go for an hour’s drive towards South-Western side of Purulia town and see Balarampur, Paradda and Charida. The nearest big attraction is Ayodhya Hills at about half an hour distance from Charida.

Charida is the village of the mask makers, located in Baghmundi with 300 artists who make masks for the famous Chau Dance. Witness the brilliance of artistry and creativity that goes beyond the mask making made from paper pulp, mud and clay using acrylic colors.

Ample choices of accommodation are available at Purulia town and Ayodhya Hills. One can also stay at Nimdhi Gandhi Asram, which is an hour away, with provision of simple hygienic stay along with hot cooked Indian food. Hotels/ Lodges are also available at Charida.
Nadia, the land of Sri Chaitanya, rich in music is situated at the heart of West Bengal.

From Kolkata to Krishnanagar it takes 2.5 hours to reach by train.

Ghurni is 10 mins away from Krishnanagar. Ghurni is the hub where more than 1000 artists make clay dolls. The crafts person shape the humble clay into miniature human figures at work. The perfect detailing of forms, features and stance, the meticulous realism of clothes to the last fold and tuck and the marvelous expression make each doll a collector’s item. Spend the day time; experience the making of these beautiful, lively clay structures which are adorned with vibrant colors.

You may start your day at the Krishnanagar Rajbari. The Rajbari Palace built here during the reign of Raja Krishna Chandra Rai is a prominent place of tourist attraction, though the remnants of the past glory have eroded, only a dilapidated structure of the exquisite palaces with carving on its inner walls exists today. Brahma Mandir, established in 1847 by Debendranath Tagore, is an added attraction. If you are a connoisseur of beautiful architectural designs then Krishnanagar College is a place you must visit, dating back to 1846, it has a public library which was built a decade later. Both are now heritage buildings, wonderful examples of Indo-European architecture. Krishnanagar is also famous for mouth-watering sweets like ‘sarbhaaja’ and ‘sarpuria’.

It is worth planning a visit to the legendary weavers of Phulia and Santipur to see the traditional weaves of Bengal. From Krishnanagar, Phulia is about 50 minutes away and Santipur is 30 minutes away.

Ample choices of accommodation are available at Krishnanagar town. One can also visit Gorbhang, Fakir village and stay at the well-furnished guest rooms at their resource center, with provision of simple hygienic stay along with hot cooked Indian food. Home stay is also available at Gorbhang.

There are about 700 Baul and Fakirs in Nadia. From Krishnanagar you can visit Asannagar (12 kms), Chapra (35 kms), Gorbhang (50 kms), the hub of these artists. While entering the villages one is likely to hear the strumming of instruments and the sweet melodies sung by the Baul Fakirs. The Baul Fakirs have their annual festival in different villages during April to January. Gorbhang, home of about 80 Fakirs,
About TourEast

banglanatak dot com has launched 'TourEast' to promote cultural tourism destinations of rural Bengal and offer authentic experience of heritage traditions and simplicity of rural life.

West Bengal offers unique amalgamation of diverse cultures and natural beauty of myriad hues. With 1.35 billion travellers worldwide and 35% interested in cultural tourism, it is an opportune time to showcase the cultural heritage of Bengal.

TourEast aims at engaging local communities in promoting cultural tourism thus ensuring economic benefit to the local people, strengthening community identity and pride and increasing local ownership on natural and cultural resources.

The villages of folk artists and crafts persons are perfect retreats for city dwellers leading a frenzied lifestyle. They offer domestic and international visitors a rich cultural experience. Visiting artists' houses, learning their stories, interacting with artists, doing your own craft, learning traditions- are the few of the unique experiences offered in these trips.

Visitors who are regular to tourist destinations like Santiniketan, Bishnupur, Ayodhya Hills, Malda or Dooars can add a day in the itinerary for a trip to these craft and art hubs. All of them have hotels and tourist lodges in nearby locations. There is also scope for village stay and enjoying simple Indian meals cooked by the households.

Art lovers, researchers, students or institutions interested in field trips, academic visits or placing interns, engaging volunteers, photographers, young professionals from other sectors, including the corporate may try these newly developed heritage based cultural tourism destinations. One can plan either a day tour or a weekend tour including night stay in these beautiful villages.

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Accommodation facility index:

- Hotels
- Stay at Resource Centre/ Village