# ***Things you shouldn’t miss when you are in Hampi***

Hampi, a UNESCO world heritage site, offers a huge number of things to do. It became the state capital of Vijayanagara empire in 14th century and also famous as the kingdom of monkeys aka Kishkindha where Lord Ram met Hanuman while searching for his wife,Goddess Sita. From mythological to historical, this place offers everything. From cycling to riding a coracle, it makes up for a terrific getaway. Here are a few things that you shouldn’t miss out when in Hampi.

**Seek Blessings from an Elephant in Virupaksha temple**

This temple dates back to 14th century and is one of the oldest working temples of India. Dedicated to Virupaksha, a form of Lord Shiva, it’s a predominant centre of pilgrimage. As soon as you enter Hampi, this is the first temple you see. With a wooden chariot in front, used during annual chariot festival in February.

The temple has shrines of Virupaksha, Goddess Pampa and other deities. The temple complex has rooms that can be rented for nominal charges. Admire the wall murals and paintings on the ceiling which give a glimpse of the bygone era. It’s peaceful to sit in the courtyard and watch the proceedings. On your way out don’t forget to get blessed by Lakshmi, the temple elephant.

**Visit the famous stone chariot at Vittala temple complex**

The icon of Karnataka tourism, this is Hampi’s jewel. No one can have their visit to Hampi completed without visiting the stone chariot.  When  King Krishnadevaraya of the Vijayanagara Empire went to fight a battle in Orissa during the 16th century , he was fascinated by the Konark suntemple chariot and asked one to be built in his kingdom too. The chariot although looks like a single solid structure, but is built by fixing granite slabs with their joints cleverly hidden. Inspired by Dravidian architecture, this structure gives us an insight in the skills of artists and and craftsmen at that time.

Vittala Temple complex

According to locals , they believe that the world would come to an end when the chariot moves.

**Watch sunrise/sunset from Matanga hill**

Absolutely no pressure here, if you aren’t a morning person go for the sunset. But don’t miss out on this. Matanga hill is centrally located and one of the highest points in Hampi. To witness an incredible view with the sun going down over the sleeping town of hampi, would be a thing to remember.

Bird-eye view of hampi

To reach here, just walk in opposite direction from the Virupaksha temple, until you see the signboard directing towards the hill. Climbing up may take around half an hour, so make sure you start in time so as not to miss it. From top you get a beautiful view of Hanuman temple, gopurams of Vittala temple and the fortress across the river.

**Go Spinning in a Coracle**

Riding coracle in Sanapur lake

Coracle, also known as Dongi in local language, is a bowl shaped boat made of  reed, saplings and hide. You can ride a coracle in Tungabhadra river or in Sanapur lake. Either opt for a short ride or if you want to get more adventurous you can go for a long one. The pilot shows you the nearby temples and just meander away in peace with all the beauty around. Don’t forget to go for a spin before you end your ride. Hold on to the boat tight and get dizzy with your head spinning in circles.

**Climb 575 steps to Anjaneya Hill- Lord Hanuman’s birth place**

Known as the birth place of Hanuman, this place is on the hippie island side. You need to cross the river to reach here. It comes on your way to Anegundi and can be easily spotted by whitewashed temple at the hilltop. There is a trail of 575 steps, to reach on top of the hill and beware of monkeys on the way as they have a tendency to snatch anything that catches their fancy.

A lone tree on top of Anjaneya hill

The hilltop has temple dedicated to Lord Hanuman, Lord rama and Goddess Sita. The view from top is exquisite and that’s why I ditched the temple and went left towards the boulders. You can sit there and admire the view around. Patches of paddy fields, tall coconut trees and mighty Tungabhadra can be seen from the vantage point. Don’t litter the place and just bring back whatever you took.

**Ride around the Hippie island and Sanapur Lake**

Hire a scooty or a bike to get the most out of it. It would be better if you cross the river and then rent a bike from Hippie island. Or if you have already rented one then that needs to be ferried over. It’s a delight to drive on these roads with coconut trees on the side and brook flowing on the other.

Riding alongside Sanapur Lake

Fresh air and huge boulders with changing landscape is definitely a good idea. Make your way towards Anegundi village, the earlier capital of Vijayanagar empire. Surrounded by hill son three sides and river tungabhadra on third, it’s a place of historical importance. The place was establised 5000 yrs back and is now preserved by kishkindha trust.

Head over to Anegundi fort to watch some traditional art or visit Pampa sarovar, a lake filled with lillies. Once done with Anegundi, head towards Sanapur lake and indulge in some of the best scenic beauty on your way.

**Hangout at Mango Tree**

Hampi’s most famous and well known restaurant. Located in the main bazaar has built a reputation. It offers good food and quality service. The restaurant was earlier located at river banks but had to be shifted due to restoration work by authorities. It has an unfinished painting on one of it’s walls of the old location. Gulp down some lemon nana (lemonade) or some fresh juices while you are here and try out different cuisines. Due to huge number of foreigners visiting this place they serve food from different countries.

You can sit down on the cushions laid out on the floor or opt for chairs. It’s perfect to relax after a day long Hampi excursion.

**Cycling amidst the ancient ruins**

This has to be my favourite activity. Make sure it’s not too hot while you are there and this could turn out to be the best decision made. Bicycles can be hired near Hampi main Bazaar.

Cycing in Hampi

We cycled with no destination in mind . But you can buy a map of the historical sites and strike them off while enjoying the ride.

**Rock climbing in Hampi**

Even though I have never tried this but it has always caught my attention. It’s one of those things, I would love trying on my next visit to Hampi. If you are novice like me and have no rock climbing gear or knowledge, several travel organisations take weeekend trips to hampi, with included rock climbing sessions.

[http://www.getbeyondlimits.com/treks/hampiBoulderingHeritageTrek](https://web.archive.org/web/20180404134616/http:/www.getbeyondlimits.com/treks/hampiBoulderingHeritageTrek)

One such site, I stumbled upon recently.

In case you already have a know-how of things and you are good to go on your own, gears are easily available for rent in Hampi.

**Cliff Jumping and swim with crocodiles**

If you aren’t a history buff and all the ancient ruins and historical stuff bores you ,sweat not !! Cause Hampi can quest your thirst for adventure too. Head over towards Sanapur lake. Take help from a local to guide you to the cliff jumping point. Although the painted signboards warn you of risk of crocodile but there haven’t been any incidents yet according to past cliff divers. The sight of the magnificent lake would surely tempt you to take that leap.

Just a caution, even though there haven’t been any incidents so far, you really must ensure from a local if it’s safe. I personally haven’t tried this, completely based on other people’s experience.

*Here is my complete list of things to do. Tell me about your experiences and if there is anything that I missed and should try out next time.*

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