

Watch thousands of fireflies glowing in the forests of Maharashtra

Catch the glow as fireflies light up the forests in the Western Ghats in Maharashtra, drawing travellers to witness the visual spectacle

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one end to the other in a magical pattern,” says Digvijay Rathore, a senior trek leader of Mischief Treks, Mumbai, who has been taking groups of people on firefly trails, festivals and camps for the past six years.

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Season of the fireflies

This is the season of the fireflies. Starting from the second week of May, when summer is just about to transition to the rainy season, spurts of summer showers are common. This is followed by a brief lull before the rains come down. This is also a period when the fireflies come out to mate, decorating the forests like strings of fairy lights. The phenomenon usually happens along the Western Ghats, and the mating time of the fireflies is based on weather conditions in these regions.

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“There is only a small window of say 15 days when the mating of the fireflies takes place. It usually happens when there is a certain moisture in the air, just before the onset of the monsoon,” adds Digvijay.



Travel and adventure companies in and around Mumbai have been offering curated firefly festivals, camps, and treks in Bhandardara, Rajmachi, Igatpuri, Lonavala, Karjat, Prabalmachi, Purushwadi and Kothaligad regions in Maharashtra district, where one can watch this congregation of flashing fireflies.

What usually starts in May, can extend up to the first week of June in Maharashtra. “The breeding season starts pre-monsoon. In Coorg, it is during the first and second weeks of April and then they travel up north towards Maharashtra,” says Obuli Chandran, a science communicator and founder of Mango Education, an alternative school for fundamental and applied science for children. In April, he had taken a group of children to witness the fireflies at Madikkeri in Coorg. “We were at the Rainforest Retreat in Madikkeri, in an organic plantation and we saw swarms of fireflies flashing, the children were delighted. They had never seen something like that before,” he adds.

Close to the Sahyadri

Mumbai being close to the Sahyadri range has hills and forests just a couple of hours away from the city and watching the fireflies has become sought-after experience, says Vinay Gupta of Adventure Geek, a trekking group that also conducts backpacking tours, and specialised seasonal packages such as the mango festival. This season, most of the



With the number of visitors going up over the years, great care is taken not to disturb the insects, says Digvijay. “We tell campers that the focus is on the fireflies and not on ‘camping’. To those who come expecting bonfires and barbecues, we educate them about how fireflies are extremely sensitive to small changes in the environment. Fire, smoke, and lights can pollute their environment and cause harm,” he explains.

While the camps in the initial years have been getting people from in and around Mumbai, the past few years have seen people from other parts of India including Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

“Some times, a single tree in the forest could have 15,000 to 20,000 fireflies and if you are camping, you might find a number of them glowing inside your tent, too,” Digvijay signs off.

Firefly treks and camps are on until June 17, and range from ₹499 to ₹1,699 a person. Tickets on bookmyshow.com, insider.in.

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