

A significant departure from the ordinary, Mizoram is yet to become entirely travel savvy. Waterfalls, tiger reserves and trekking trails woo lone travellers with some of the most magnificent landscapes



## Jungle lore

Get lost in the drama of majestic triangular forests of the east

**What:** Enclosed in the dramatic folds of the dense forests of Mizoram, the **Dampa Tiger Reserve, Phawngpui Blue Mountain National Park** and **Murlen National Park** lie in a triangular shape, but the trip helps you cover a large part of the state keeping wildlife in mind. The shadowy jungles, gurgling streams and rustling sounds made will transport you to a world of majestic forest cover.

**Why:** Established in 1985 and declared a Tiger Reserve in 1994, Dampa is the most coveted hot spot for wildlife enthusiasts. Home to leopards, Indian bisons, gibbons, slow loris, wild boars and a variety of reptiles and birds, the tangle of deep forests gives you an otherworldly ambience. The same goes for the southern Phawngpui National Park, which covers only 50 sqkm and Murlen to the east of Aizawl.

**How:** Arrive in Aizawl, the capital city of Mizoram and use this as a base to cover both Dampa and Murlen forest reserves. Phawngpui National Park can be reached by road from Aizawl. Permission is required to enter.

## Hmuifang and Reiek Tlang

Explore the biking and hiking trails of the hills

**What:** If you feel that you belong to the mountains alone, explore the most eminent hill stations of Hmuifang Tlang and Reiek Tlang in Mizoram. Whether you choose to explore the hill stations on a mountain bike, a local bus or foot, the spirit of the solo traveller is fully satiated only once you peep down these hilltops. Both Hmuifang Tlang and Reiek Tlang can be accessed easily by Aizawl and offer an insight into local life in the villages other than the jaw dropping views.

**Why:** Reiek Tlang lies 12km west of Aizawl and rests on a 1,548m

## Hiking holidays

Walk the magical trails of Lengteng and Mawmrang

**What:** The legendary trekking trails of Mizoram may challenge even the most accomplished hiker, but the sense of achievement to scale some of the highest peaks of the state is exhilarating. The most popular trekking route is one that meanders through the Blue Mountain National Park. If that does not fill your appetite, then Lengteng and Mawmrang trails are surely going to amp up the outdoor experience.

**Why:** Hiking through the towering trees and thick undergrowth in the Blue Mountain National Park is nothing short of ethereal. Once you hit the peak and look down at the clouds filling the valley, you will truly get a bird's eye view to the divinity that resides in these forests. The caves, troughs and peaks of the Lengteng and Mawmrang trails are also spectacular.

**How:** You may arrive as a solo traveller to Aizawl, but its best to join conducted treks by locals. Contact **Youth Hostels Association** of India for details on treks in Mizoram ([www.yhaindia.org](http://www.yhaindia.org); 0389 2325263). The organisation hold treks every November, which can be booked in advance.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY: MIZORAM TOURISM

## Shimmering Vantawng falls

Rejuvenate your senses with leisurely picnics

**What:** Be it waterfalls or lakes, camping close to one or even picnicking for an entire afternoon with your feet dipped in water is nothing less than therapeutic. Visit the Vantawng falls south of Aizawl and head further down to the Palak Dil from here. Equally stunning views await at the **Tam Dil**, a reservoir lake close to Aizawl.

**Why:** The highest waterfall of the state, Vantawng lies 137 km off the capital city of Aizawl. The Vanva River plunges down in a rush from a height of 750ft or possibly more as one cannot see the head

of the falls clearly in the forested hillside. One can stand at the bottom and enjoy the spray from the deep fall. Another glistening delight is the Tam Dil Lake, 86 km east of Aizawl. The Palak Dil Lake is the largest in the state and a part of the Palak Wildlife Sanctuary. Spotting unique birds and fauna is not uncommon here.

**How:** Arrive in Aizawl and take the Inner Line Permit required for all travellers. All the spots are best done via road. The closest point to the Vantawng falls is Serchip and the best season to see it in full glory is just after the monsoons in September.

Surrounded by lush greenery Vantawng fall is named after an ace local swimmer



**SECRET**

### MIZO HANDICRAFTS

Bag yourself a 'Mizo' look with a traditional ceremonial hat called *Khumbeu*. This is prepared using the rainproof wild leaves of hnahthial. You can get this at the Luangmual Handicrafts Centre, 7 km from Aizawl, about half an hour away. The pit stop also encompasses an insight into the other crafts of the region.

INDIA PICTURE