

Travel information to Dwaraka divya desam

NAMO NARAYANA
SRIMAN NARAYANAYA CHARANAU SARANAM PRAPATHYE
SRIMATHEY NARAYANAYA NAMAH
UDAYAVAR THIRUVADIGALEY SARANAM
MUDALIAANDAN SWAMIN THIRUVADIGALEY SARANAM

Prostrating at the feet of Lord Thiruvengadamudaiyan , I wish to briefly share my experience of our trip to ThiruDwarakai. Adiyen requests the readers to kindly correct my mistakes and enlighten me with other facts which out of ignorance, Adiyen would have failed to include. Its adiyens experience, that the curiosity to have darshan of Dwarakadeesan was done only after going through epics related to Lord Krishnas leelas and the imagination how Lords kingdom existed in Dwarakai. . Before we proceed further, let me brief out an article published in some News paper , regarding Dwarakai. The article refutes the Max-Mullerian theory of the Aryan Invasion by quoting from rgvedic scriptural passages, and goes on to prove that the Aryas were indigenous to the Indian sub-continent. Anyway, for purposes of the "fact or fiction" conversation, this is an excerpt from the article of the section entitled "Discovery of the Submerged city of Krishna's Dwaraka." "The discovery of this city is very significant and a kind of clinching evidence in discarding the Aryan invasion as well as its proposed date of 1500 BC. Its discovery not only establishes the authenticity of Mahabharat war and the main events described in the epic, but clinches the traditional antiquity of Mahabharat and Ramayana periods. So far the AIT (Aryan Invasion Theory) advocates used to either dismiss the Mahabharat epic as a fictional work of a highly talented poet or if not fictional would place it around 1000 BC. But the remains of this submerged city along the coast of Gujarat were dated 3000BC to 1500BC. In Mahabharat's Musal Parva, the Dwarka is mentioned as being gradually swallowed by the ocean. Krishna had forewarned the residents of Dwaraka to vacate the city before the sea submerged it. The Sabha Parva gives a detailed account of Krishna's flight from Mathura with his followers to Dwaraka to escape continuous attacks of Jarasandh's on Mathura and save the lives of its subjects. For this reason, Krishna is also known as (ranchhor: one who runs away from the battle-field). Dr. S. R. Rao and his team in 1984 - 88 (Marine Archaeology Unit) undertook an extensive search of this city along the coast of Gujarat where the Dwarikadeesh temple stands now, and finally they succeeded in unearthing the ruins of this submerged city off the Gujarat coast."A couple of years ago there was some article in The Hindu (paper) that Dwarakai was Located under sea in Gujarat state in India. And Also, Saraswathi river, one of the rivers in Threeveni was in existence.and the recent earth quake in Kutch and the after effect about the discovery of Saraswati river clearly proves the fact.

TOUR SCHEDULE:

| Date | From | To | Mode of Journey |
|-----------|--------------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| 14/5/2000 | Secunderabad | Mumbai | Sed-Mumbai Exp. (15 hrs journey) |
| 15/5/2000 | - | - | Stayed in Mumbai |
| 16/5/2000 | Mumbai | Ahmedabad | Mumbai-Okha Port Exp (12 hrs) |
| 17/5/2000 | Ahmedabad | Dwaraka | By bus via Rajkot (8 hrs) |
| 18/5/2000 | Dwaraka | Ahm.bad | Bu bus (8 hrs) |

Travel information to Dwaraka divya desam

| | | | |
|-----------|---------|-------------|--------------------|
| 20/5/2000 | Ahmbad | Dak.Dwaraka | By car (2 hrs) |
| 20/5/2000 | Ahm.bad | Mumbai | By train (8 hrs) |
| 21/5/2000 | Mumbai | Sec.bad | By train (20 hrs) |

Our trip to Dwaraka:

After taking our elders' blessings, we left for Dwaraka via Mumbai, Ahmedabad etc on 14/5/00. The nearest station to Dwaraka is **Okha Port.**, As we were not aware of this, we had reserved our tickets only upto Ahmedabad and as the T.T.E did not concede our request to continue our journey in the same coach, we got down at Ahmedabad at 4 A.M.on 17th . The co-passengers dropped us in a bus terminus which is situated 2 kms away from the railway station. We had to wait for nearly two hours in the bus terminus. Based on local people's advise, we went by bus to Rajkot(6 hrs) In the noon, we changed bus to Dwaraka from Rajkot and reached Dwaraka at 4 P.M. The journey is very different as on the way we find there is no inhabitation around. A typical desert type atmosphere where a thin stretch of road is laid. A huge factory of Reliance group can be seen on the left . Gujarat is a very dry place and our journey was horrible due to the scorching summer heat. **IF ANYONE IS WISHING TO UNDERTAKE A PILGRIMAGE TO DWARAKA, THEY MUST ENSURE TO CARRY SUFFICIENT DRINKING WATER AS WE DO NOT GET DRINKING WATER AT DWARAKA(DUE TO SAGE DURVASA'S CURSE). DWARAKA IS A DESERT COVERED BY SEA WATER ON ALL SIDES. AS THE SEA WATER IS SALTISH, IT CANNOT BE USED AND THEY MUST ALLOCATE MINIMUM 5 DAYS TO VISIT ALL THE DWARAKAS.**

SRI KALYANA NAACHIYAR NAYIKA SAMETHA SRI DWARAKADEESA
PARABRAHMANE NAMAH

THIRUDWARAKAI:

LOCATION : KATHIAWAR PENINSULA NEAR OKHA PORT IN GUJARAT

Half mile from Dwaraka railway station

MOOLAVAR: SRI DWARAKADEESAN-NINDRA THIRUKOLAM-FACING WEST

THAYAR : KALYANA NAACHIYAR/LAKSHMISRI

THEERTHAM: GOMTI RIVER, ARABIAN SEA(SAMUDRA SANGAMAM)

VIMANAM : HEMAKOOTA VIMANAM

MANGALASAASANAM: NAMMAZHVAR (3260)

PERIAZHVAR(333,398,399,415,472)

ANDAL (507,541,594,625)

THIRUMANGAI(1504,1524)

THIRUMAZHISAI (2452)

THONDARADIPODI (916)

IMPORTANT PLACES TO VISIT: 1) Dwarakadeesh Mandir, Gayatri Devi Mandir, Gita Mandir, Rukmini Devi Mandir, Gopi Tank, Bhet Dwaraka, Moola Dwaraka, Prabhasa Theertham, Mukti Dwaraka , Dakore Dwaraka etc.

ABOUT THE DIVYA DESAM:

<http://srivaishnavam.com>

Travel information to Dwaraka divya desam

- 1) Neither the vigrahams nor the temple as described by our Azhwars are in existence.
- 2) To protect His people from Jarasandha and Kalayavanan, Lord Krishna built the city of Dwaraka in the ocean. This “golden city” which was compared to Lord Indra’s Amaravathi was built by Viswakarma, the divine architect in the midst of the sea at the behest of Lord Sri Krishna. All the people of Mathura were shifted to this city by Krishna. For a detailed description of this city, one may refer to Srimad Bhagavatham.
- 3) As long as Lord Krishna was there, the sea could not exceed its limits. But soon after the departure of Lord Sri Krishna and due to Gandhari and Saptha rishis’ curse (which was nothing but Perumals’ Thiruvullam), the city got submerged into the sea and the whole Yadu vamsam perished. In the Srimad Bhagavatham it is given that even as Arjuna (who had come to escort the Yadavas who were alive to Hastinapura) was seeing, the sea entered the city and swayed the whole city. Within seconds, the beautiful palaces of Sri Krishna collapsed and got drowned in the sea. Before this incident could take place, Lord Sri Krishna summoned Vayu and Guru to carry away from Dwaraka the idol which was worshipped by Lord Himself. This idol is the famous GURUVAYOORAPPAN.
- 4) Latest excavations also have revealed about the city of Dwaraka. In fact, the Central Govt. has plans to construct a underwater Museum (the first of its kind and I believe this work has already been started.
- 5) Dwaraka is one of the four dhams. The other three dhams are Puri, Badrinath and Rameswaram.
- 6) Dwaraka is one of the seven “MUKTHI THARUM KSHETRAMS”. The other six are Mathura, Ayodhya, Kasi, Gaya, Kanchi, Ujjain
- 7) Sri Adisankaracharyar established mattas at 4 places- at Dwaraka, Puri, Sringeri and Joshimutt.
- 8) There are 9 Dwarakas (some take only the most prominent ones and say there are Pancha Dwarakas. The nine Dwarakas are :

(A)DWARAKADEESH DWARAKA, - the main temple of Lord Sri Krishna built in the 16th century known as “JAGAT MANDIR” and as “DWARAKADEESH MANDIR”-A very big temple with multi-pillared sabhas and 60 pillared sanctum with separate shrines for Lord Krishna and His Ashta Mahishis, namely, Rukmini, Satyabhama, Jambavati, Kalindhi, Mithravinda, Badra, Lakshmana, Srutakeerthi. There are also Sannadhis for Balaramar, Durvasar. As it is located in the spot as described in Naalayiram, this is considered as the Divya Desam. The temple which was built by Pradyumna overnight is not to be seen. The present temple is 1500 years old.

(B) GOMTI DWARAKA - the temple on the banks of river Gomti

(C) RUKMINI DWARAKA - Lord Krishna married Rukmini (locally known as Rukmini Devi Mandir built in 12-13th century (to give money as charity for “NEER(WATER) DHANAM”)

(D) BHET DWARAKA - this temple in the island is situated near Okha Port which is around 30 kms from Dwaraka built in 19th century- separate shrine for Devaki, Rukmini, Lakshmi Narayanan

(E) SUDHAMA DWARAKA- the present Porbandhar, the birth place of Gandhiji-Sudhama (Kuselan) lived here

(F) MOOLA DWARAKA-the place where Lord Sri Krishna first placed His foot.

Travel information to Dwaraka divya desam

This is enroute to Dwaraka from Rajkot near Kodinar and the temple Is abandoned

- (G)MUKTI DWARAKA - located at Veravel, near Somnath (the famous Shaivite pilgrimage center) on the banks of Prabhasa Theertham-
- (H)DAKORE DWARAKA - the original idol of Lord Sri Krishna is here. This is between Ahmedabad and Mehmabad (60 kms from Nadiad) built in 18th century- the idol makes one remember “Guruvayoorappan”
- (I) SHRINATHJI DWARAKA - 50 miles from Udaipur via Mavli

Out of the 9 Dwarakas, we visited Dwarakadeesh Dwaraka, Rukmini Dwaraka, Bhet Dwaraka, Dakore Dwaraka, Gomti Dwaraka, (enroute we were shown Moola Dwaraka) The other Dwarakas namely Sudhama Dwaraka, Mukti Dwaraka and Shrinathji Dwaraka are far away from the present Dwaraka and if anyone intends to visit these temples, unlike us , they must plan their time schedule in advance.

- 9) ISKCON has a temple. Apart from this, you can find innumerable temples En route and all temples are conical in shape (pagoda type construction) and has a huge flag hoisted on the top. The main temple is the tallest and is 157 feet high.
- 10) The changing of flag in front of the temple is a sight which is not to be missed. A silk cloth which measures about 20 metres is used for the flag. Everyday, the flag is changed DAILY In fact, some devotees undertake a vow to hoist a flag and we were told that it costs about Rs.1,500/- (Sometimes the flag is changed every 1 hour)
- 11) DWARAKA is the gateway to Heaven. Any dhanam done here will fetch multifold benefits. In fact, the temple authorities maintain slab system. Especially, dhanam to Brahmins at the main temple and giving money for getting water from elsewhere(at Rukmini Devi Mandir) for the residents are compulsory. (we were told that the Brahmins who were solely dependent on the temple would get one-fourth of the share. Accordingly, we paid Rs.1,000/- (In fact, we gave them some advance and sent DD for the remaining amount after coming back to Hyderabad) The Brahmin made a sankalp. He said “MISRI BHOG” would be offered to the Lord the next day and gave us some prasadam and 2 small piece of cloth (like uttareeyam–We gave one to our brother-in-law (Narayanan) and brought another one to our house. In fact, we recollect our trip to Thirudwarakai during festivals when we adorn vigrahams in our kutilam with the cloth.
- 12) Every day, neivedyam which is called as “BHOG” is offered 17 times. Sweets including chakarai pongal, milk, curd, different types of fruits etc are offered to the Lord. We were told that every day in the morning, the Misri bhog is first offered to all the Mahishis, Balaramar, Durvasar and then only to the Lord. We were informed by the Maharaj (Archakar) that Lord is treated as a chinni Krishna(A golden tooth brush is provided for his morning wash which is called as UDAPAN and then Mishri bhog is offered.
- 13) It is interesting to note that pilgrims are allowed to enter through the eastern entrance which is known as “SWARG DHWAR” and the pilgrims come out of the western entrance known as “MUKTI DHWAR”
- 14) It was here that Kuselan, Krishna’s childhood friend) came in search of Lord Krishna with a handful of broken rice (avul). As he kept on asking for the entrance in Hindi as “DWAAR KAHAN HAI”, this word got corrupted as Dwaraka.

Travel information to Dwaraka divya desam

- 15) Lord Sri Krishna answered Rukmini Devi's prayers and abducted her and got married to her in Dwaraka. There is a separate temple dedicated to Rukmini Devi known as "RUKMINI DEVI MANDIR".. We were told that the divine marriage took place in this spot .It was here that Lord Sri Krishna got married to Rukmini and other 8 Mahisis and 16,000 damsels who were imprisoned by Narakasuran. Lord Sri Krishna lived with His 16,008 wives in this place expanding Himself into as many forms as it was required. There is an interesting story in Srimad Bhagavatham about this. Narada maharishi was curious to see the Lord living with so many wives and came to Dwaraka. When the rishi went to Rukmini Devi's palace, He saw the Lord and Lord offered His respects to him. Wherever the rishi went, the Lord offered His respects and did paadapooja etc. along with His respective consort. The sage was mesmerized to see the Lord doing japam in one place, talking in another palace, doing pooja etc in another palace and so on. When the Lord wanted to go to the palace, all the innumerable forms would come out of the palaces and merge with the Lord and only one form of the Lord would go to the palace. Sage Narada was bewildered and fell prostrate at the feet of the Lord of the Universe and with His permission left the place.
- 16) It was from here that the Lord answered Draupadi's prayers during her Vastrabhaharanam. When Draupadi was being insulted by the Kauravass, she cried to the Lord as
"SANKHU CHAKRA GADA PAANE DWARAKANILAY ATCHUTHA, GOVINDA PUNDARIKAKSHA RAKSHAMAM SARANAM GATHI" and immediately Lord protected her.
- 17) It was from here that the Lord went to Hastinapuram as "PAANDAVADOOTHAN"
- 18) It was here that "PARIJATHAM TREE" was brought from Indralokam and planted here.
- 19) Even today, we can find pieces of marble in the sea. These pieces are believed to be part of Lord Krishna's palace. They are known as "GOMATHI CHAKRAM" and as "DWARAKA STONES:and are treated on par with Salagramams. There are no strict norms for offering worship to these stones like Saligramam. While Salagramam are treated as Lord Vishnu, these Dwaraka stones are considered as Thayar. These stones are in different shapes and sizes. We were told by Sri.Mohan Swamigal, Archakar of Sri Venkateswara Perumal kovil at Secunderabad that if there are 12 such Gomathi chakrams, then the place is considered to be "Thirumaaligai". Elders say that those who worship Salagramam and Dwaraka Stones will attain moksham without fail. One can find as many as 16 small chakrams in one stone. These are "SWAYAMBHU" and hence considered to be very sacred and auspicious. These Gomathi chakrams can be found in the sea . In fact, they are sold on the shores of Gomati River also. Some believe it to be parts of pillars in Krishna's palace. As these pieces of stones had Lord Krishna's sparsham, they are considered to be very very sacred. Adiyen was able to be graced with many dwaraka saalagramams.
- 20) There is a story connected with the saltish water in Dwaraka :Once Rukmini Devi and Lord Krishna were carrying Sage Durvasa on a palanquin. As Rukmini felt thirsty, Krishna with His toe dug the ground and made water appear and Rukmini quenched her thirst. But this infuriated the Sage who was by nature short-tempered. He lost his balance and cursed that as they did not take his permission, the whole area would be without drinking water. It is sad to note that even today the residents of Dwaraka bring water from elsewhere .(In Tamil, they say

Travel information to Dwaraka divya desam

“THANNI ILLADHA KAADU”-may be they refer to places like this)We were also told that the sage further cursed Rukmini that she had to stay separately for 6 months. We were also told that Lord Krishna assured Rukmini that He would visit her everyday. These stories were narrated by the local residents and to the best of my knowledge, I have not read about the incident anywhere. I humbly request the readers to kindly correct me. The vigraham of Rukmini Devi is eye captivating. She is seen with 4 hands holding sanghu and chakram in 2 hands. Outside the temple, we were asked to pay some money for “Neer Dhanam”

21) Once the gopis of Vrindavan wanted to have darshan of the Lord and came to Dwaraka. They all had a dip in the tank which is now known as “GOPIS TANK”. We were also told that impressed with their Bhakti, Lord Sri Krishna blessed them with Moksha. There is an interesting story which Adiyen happened to read yesterday. One evening when Rukmini was offering paadapooja to the Lord, she was shocked to see boils on Perumal’s Thiurvadi. When she wanted to clarify with Perumal, Perumal told her that as Radha Rani drank the boiling milk offered by Rukmini, these boils were caused **as He resides forever in the hearts of His devotees**. In another instance, Lord wanted to prove the superiority of Gopi’s bhakti over His Mahishis bhakti and pretended to suffer from headache. When none could cure of His ailment, the Lord suggested that the paada dhooli of his bhaktas would revive Him from His headache. On hearing this, the gopis of Vrindavan sent cart load of the dust of their feet to Krishna the Lord’s headache was cured. Thus, Dwaraka is closely intertwined with Lord Sri Krishna’s life .

22) **MUKTI DWARAKA**: It may be recalled that when Lord Sri Krishna decided to complete His incarnation, He relaxed under a tree. At that time, a hunter , Jara, who was Vali in his previous birth, hit the Lord with an arrow. The repentant hunter apologized for his folly and at that time Lord enlightened him about his previous birth. At that time, Lord Brahma, Shiva and other Devas came to offer prayers to the Lord . Lord Sri Krishna exhibited His divine form with 4 hands and Thayar seated on His right breast. At that time, Lord Brahma and others addressed the Lord as the one bearing the bow, indicating Sri Ramaavataaram. *The Divine spirit ascended to the Heavens piercing the Solar Orb. Then the spirit appeared to Brahma and the others as a stone image and simultaneously a voice from the Heavens proclaimed that He would appear on earth in that shape , which while appearing to be stony and lifeless would possess considerable spiritual power, that He would remain on earth thereafter till the end of Kaliyugam and that Brahma and the Devas should continue their worship there. This incident happened at the end of Dwapara Yuga.* (This story is depicted in Chapter V of Mausala Parva of Sri Mahabharatha) In the beginning of Kaliyuga, Lord manifested Himself at Thiruvengadam This Lord is our Thiruvengadamudayan and our Tirumala is Kaliyuga Vaikuntam. Even today, all the devas headed by Lord Brahma come to Thiruvengadam and offer worship to the Lord. Hence, every night after EKANTA SEVA, the archakars in the Tirumalai temple fill all the pancha paatrams with water for the devas to perform pooja and leave the place. This theertham is offered to devotees who participate in the next day “SUPRABHATA SEVA”. We were told that there is a small temple dedicated to Lord Sri Krishnar under the tree in Veravel. Only in this place, Lord Krishna is seen in “SAYANA THIRUKOLAM” We could not visit this temple as we were told that it would take minimum 10 hours to go there and come back to Dwaraka.

23) **THE MAIN IDOL AND DAKORE DWARAKA**: The idols as described in Naalayira Divya prabhandam is not to be found. There is an interesting story about the present idol. There lived a Brahmin near Ahmedabad who was a staunch devotee of <http://srivaishnavam.com>

Travel information to Dwaraka divya desam

Lord Sri Krishna. Every year , he used to visit Dwaraka and it used to take 6 months for him to reach Dwaraka. He would plant a small Tulasi plant and water it daily and used to carry the same along with other offerings in his bullock cart. Lord was very much impressed with the sincere devotion of the Brahmin. As the Brahmin was getting old, it was becoming very difficult for him to go the Dwaraka. Once when the Brahmin reached Dwaraka and offered neivedyam to the Lord, the Lord ordered the Brahmin to take Him to his house saying that as there was no sincere bhakta, He did not wish to stay there. Due to God's will, the temple doors opened in the midnight and the Lord got Himself placed in the bullock cart and drove the cart. Within a span of 3 to 4 hours, the Lord along with the Brahmin reached the present DAKORE DWARAKA. (As already mentioned, it used to take 6 months to reach the place but due to Perumal's sankalpam, the Brahmin reached his town within 3 hours. The people at Dwaraka were shocked to see the idol missing. They suspected the poor Brahmin whom they had heard speaking to the idol previously. Accordingly, all of them went in search of the old man and it took months for them to reach the place. They turned violent when they saw their idol with the old Brahmin. They did not pay heed to the words of the Brahmin and started abusing the Brahmin. At that time, an aseeriri was heard by everyone which clearly said that whoever offers gold equal to the weight of the Lord, could take the vigraham. The residents of Dwaraka accumulated all their wealth and placed it in the thulabharam but the weight was not equal. At that time, the Brahmin and his wife offered prayers to Perumal and the lady placed her "nose ring" and the balance was equal. As Perumal was not interested to stay where there was no sincere bhakti, Perumal had moved to this place out of His own will.. This place came to be known as **Dakore Dwaraka** as the idol was brought by the old man whom they considered to be a Daaku (thief). [In Gujarat, Perumal is lovingly called as RANCHOR RAYA (Even today we can see the TULABHARAM inside the temple premises. The people of Dwaraka repented for their folly and pleaded with Perumal to forgive their mistake. Perumal ordered them to make another idol and said that they should not open the room in which the idol was kept for 6 months. The people made an idol and kept in a room and locked it . But out of curiosity, even before the specified time was over, they opened the doors of the room. They found to their dismay that the eyes of the Lord were closed. An asareeri was once again heard which said that as they did not obey Lord's command, the eyes were closed. The people realized their blunder and apologized for their unpardonable mistake. Hence, the present idol in Dwaraka is seen with closed eyes. Unless we are told about this, we cannot make out as the vigraham is well decorated. Lord Dwarakadeesan is seen holding Sankhu, Chakram, Padmam. He is dressed 4 times daily. Every day, like in Guruvayoor, Perumal is dressed lika a child, boy, youth, old man We were told that during winter, Perumal would be dressed in woolen clothes and in summer, He is dressed in light clothes. Every day, aarthi is given 4 times.and bhogam is offered 17 times. Different eatables like Misri Bhog, chakarai pongal, milk, curd, fruits etc are continuously offered to Perumal.

24)**Bhet Dwaraka**. "Bhet" in Gujarati means island. So, Bhet Dwaraka means the temple which is in an island. (some say, bhet means "avul" and claim that Kuselan visited Krishnar at this place) . Near the sea shore, there is a temple dedicated to Lord Sri Krishna . We were told that Lord Krishna killed Shankhasura at this place. We were told that a devout king who had heard about Lord Krishna's pastimes, built the temple. In this temple also, there is a big flag post. There is also a separate sannadhi for Devaki in this place which is not to be found anywhere. It takes easily one hour to cover all the places. It is interesting to note that though this place is an island, the drinking water is very sweet like amrutham and there are more than 500 families residing in this small piece of land which is 9 square miles only. The temple is situated on a small hillock. Probably, Sage

Travel information to Dwaraka divya desam

Durvasa had left this place at the time of cursing. In this place, the river joins the sea and it is surprising to note that at this place of sangamam, the river water is sweet and the sea water is saltish.

NOW I WOULD LIKE TO BRIEFLY RECAPITULATE OUR EXPERIENCE

The temple is nearly one km from Dwaraka bus stop. We hired a tanga for Rs.10/- (cart pulled by horses). Checked in a well furnished hotel. We were told by the local residents that the night Aarthi would start around 7.30 P.M. and were advised by them to go to nearby places and come to temple by 7 P.M. After refreshing ourselves, hired a tanga for Rs.25/- and went on a sight seeing. Around the sea shore. We went to Gayatri Devi Mandir, Gita Mandir, Shiva Mandir etc.

First, we went to the sea shore. In the sea, there is a temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, and we wanted to go to the temple. But due to waves we could not go near the sea shore itself. In fact, all of us got almost drenched and as we had to protect our cam and children, we decided not to go too near the sea. From there, we went to Gita Mandir. Here, Lord Krishna is seen giving "GEETHOPADESAM" to Arjuna. The temple hall is quite big and I feel that this is the best place for a devotee to sit and meditate on the Lord peacefully. Took few photographs and left the place. From there, we went to Gayatri Devi Mandir which was crowded. Here, there is a shrine for Gayatri Devi and this temple is near the shores of Gomati River. On the way, we saw a big idol of Lord Shiva, the parama Srivaishanava, (The idol was under construction. The height of the idol could be easily 25 to 30 feet.) You can find a beautiful view of the temple gopuram with the huge flag flying to the gentle winds. A scene which is so enchanting that will put our entire life to be dedicated as some insect, sea shells etc lying there at the sea shore just to keep looking at the magnificent temple of Lord who really resided there.(As Kulasekhara Alwar pleads PADI AAI KIDANDHA...) .

From there, we went to the main temple of Dwarakadeesan. It was Ekadashi, with the moon light around We were stunned to see the architecture marvel of the temple. The temple tower is very big and we were astonished to hear that the temple was built overnight by Pradhymna, the grandson of Lord Sri Krishna. It only goes to prove that with Lord's grace, nothing is impossible and as Pradyumna was directly associated with the Lord, he could perform such a feat. There was tight security. Left our camera etc. in the cloak room for a meager fee of Rs.2/- (charges in the year 2000). Looking at the Srivaishnavite marks, a Gujarati Brahmin volunteered to guide us. We were taken to the main shrine of lord Krishna. Lord Sri Krishna (who is lovingly called as "RANCHOR RAYA") was dressed in a light coloured cloth like a cowherd boy. There was heavy gathering to witness the evening Aarthi. We stood opposite to the garbagriham at a distance of approximately 10 feet. We also participated in the Aarthi. During Aarthi, some Gujarati devotional songs were sung and people offered sweets as neivedyam to Nandalala. We were reciting Vishnu Sahasranamam at the time of Aarthi. After aarthi, we were allowed to go near the shrine to have darshan. In Gujarat, the devotees have a habit of offering sweets to the Lord from where they stand. WE were later offered theertha prasadam. The maharaj (Archakar) took us to various other shrines. There are separate shrines for Balaramar, Rukmini, Satyabhaama and mahishs.. It is interesting to note that in U.P,(Mathura, Vrindavan, Gokul), Lord Krishna is seen only with Radha Rani whereas one cannot find even a single idol of Radha Rani in Gujarat. Here, Lord Krishna is seen with His consorts, Rukmini, Satyabhama and other Mahishis. The

Travel information to Dwaraka divya desam

Brahmin was very kind to place Lord's Thiruvadigal on our heads.(Gujarathi temples generally bless us with Sattari this way) The kind hearted Brahmin dipped the Thiruvadigal of Perumal in chandanam and placed it in our Vishnu Sahasranamam book which we carry along with us. Hence, we always have the bhaagyam of looking at Perumal's thiruvadigal which makes us recollect our divya desa yatrai. We left the temple around 9.30 P.M. after thanking the maharaj for his guidance. Next day morning, we once again went to the temple for darshan and thanked Lord for his grace on us. From there we went for sight seeing to various other places. We can find innumerable bus wallahs/ private services who are ever willing to take us to other interesting places in and around Dwaraka. We paid around Rs.50/- per head for the van and we were told that we would be taken to "BHET DWARAKA" also.

The guide took us to Rukmini Devi temple and other temples. From there , we went to Gopis Tank and Bhet Dwaraka which is 30 kms away from the main Dwaraka. There are no proper roads The journey was tough as there were lots of jerks while traveling. On the way, we saw a huge Cement factory. It takes about 40-45 minutes to reach Bhet Dwaraka which is situated very near to Okha Port (one and a half km). Reached Bhet Dwaraka at 12.30 . We were all asked to hire a boat and were instructed to come back within 2 hours. It takes about 30 minutes to travel by boat to Bhet Dwaraka . We were told that drinking water is brought from Bhet Dwaraka to main Dwaraka. We could see the boats transporting animals , vehicles , goods ,water etc. The island is 9 square miles and around 500 families live in this place. As mentioned earlier, the temple which was constructed by a king is situated on a small hillock. This is the only place where you can find and has shrines for Devaki etc. Here, Perumal is seen with Chathurbujam. Came back to the boat around 2 P.M. and reached Dwaraka at 3.30 P.M. In the night around 9 P.M., boarded a private bus to Ahmedabad and reached Ahmedabad the next day, on 19th. On 19th we just relaxed in a room and did a bit of shopping Accompanied by Mrs & Mr. Panchal, we went to Dakore Dwaraka on 20th by car which is between Ahmedabad and Mehmabad. There are very few bus services and if one intends to travel by bus, then they must allot one full day in their travel schedule. It takes more than 2 hours by car to reach the place. On the way, we were taken to the temple of their "Kuladeivam". Panchal's family was very friendly and narrated the story about Dakore Dwaraka which has already been given in detail. We were told that on every Pournima, hundreds of pilgrims come by walk to the temple and give their offerings. We went on Chathurdasi(one day prior to Poornima and we could see many devotees carrying their offerings on their heads marching towards the temple). There was heavy rush in the temple. Purchased some sweets for offering the same to the Lord. The temple structure is quite different from other temples. It is circular in shape (resembles mosque) Lord Krishna's leelas are painted on the walls including the roof. After having darshan, we had delicious "DOKLAS WITH CURD" We were told that this was very famous. Went back to Mr.Panchal's house, had delicious Gujarati meals and left their house around 5 P.M. The hospitality which they had extended cannot be described in words and we are very much grateful to them.(Mr Panchal is an Industrialist who is known by official connections and it was sheer grace of Lord that the journey was so pleasant) **This once again proves the Lord's compassion towards His devotees and the saying that if" we take one step towards Lord, He will come rushing towards us 100 steps is absolutely true.** Boarded Mumbai train in the night and reached Naryanan's house in the morning.

As it was raining heavily, we could not go anywhere out. We had reserved our tickets by the night train which leaves Mumbai for Hyderabad on 21st. The scheduled departure of <http://srivaishnavam.com>

Travel information to Dwaraka divya desam

the train is 9.50 P.M. But due to heavy rains in Mumbai and traffic jam , we could reach Mumbai station only at 11.40 (Took more than 3 hours for us to go from Ghatkopar to Mumbai Central) We had lost all hopes of catching the train. But we took a chance , Sri Parthasarathy Perumal once again came to our rescue. There was lots of confusion regarding the departure of the train and we rushed to CST Mumbai by Taxi after getting down at maji Railway station due to the local train delay. To our astonishment we could hear the announcement about the Hyderabad train departure from some platform. It was almost leaving the station .Our brother-in-law helped us in carrying children and baggages and we literally ran to catch the train. We got into the last coach and as soon as we got into the train, the train started gaining speed. It was only due to Perumal's abundant grace and Acharyar's intervention in the form of Narayanan that we could complete the journey successfully. This is one of the most memorable experiences we had . By God's grace, reached Hyderabad on 22nd may

JAI SRIMAN NARAYANA