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MOTOR VIKATAN VOLUME:1 ISSUE:1



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MOTOR

The Pulsating Automobile e-Magazine

VIKATAN

**INCREDIBLE
JOURNEY TO
AN UNNAMED
WATERFALL!**

TIRUPUR - KANDALUR 



**Himalayan
Adventure**



**French Flavour
CITROËN C5
Aircross Urban SUV**

FIRST DRIVE

BHARGAV SRIDHARAN



FRENCH FLAVOUR

The sports utility vehicle (SUV) segment in India is getting stronger since few years. The customers are attracted to the SUV segment because of the high ground clearance, aggressive styling and powerful engine. The sales of SUV has more than doubled over the last five years. Considering all these points all the OEMs in India have started to bring SUVs from their table. India, houses all the global OEMs but one name was missing, which was Citroen. Now the brand has entered the Indian market with its globally successful product the C5 Aircross SUV. Citroen has redefined the name SUV to Smooth Unique Vehicle. Why is it so?

Most of the SUVs try to be stylish and sporty, usually resulting in large wheels and a muscular look, but the C5 Aircross has got plenty of styles and has put comfort first, which is exactly how it should be with an SUV. By looking at the car, one can easily say it was developed in France because of some neat design features, such as Citroen's double chevrons extend into the full width of the nose splitting the headlights with a narrow LED strip sitting atop the main beam, the intricate 3D brake lights and contrasting colour accents dotted around the body, the Citroen C5 Aircross looks considerably more interesting than its main alternatives the Jeep Compass, Hyundai Tucson, Volkswagen Tiguan Allspace etc.

The styling of C5 Aircross is distinctive and we could see the French marque evidently. Design elements like the 'Airbump' protective panels at the bottom of the doors and around the wheel arches, dummy oblong intakes in the lower bumper and side panels, window lines accentuated with a C-shaped chrome finish and blackened pillars that give a floating roof effect differentiates it from its competitors.



The 8-inch touchscreen looks small



Oblong shaped design could be seen everywhere



The LED lamps are seamlessly integrated with the grill



Swirl like pattern in 8 inch alloy wheels



The design of the tail lights is unique.



The power and torque figures are very strong for an SUV of this size.



The rear passengers too get utmost comfort with three individual seats. This lets you move the seats forwards or backwards or recline them independently.



Every aspect has a French flavour in it.

The interior of the C5 looks premium. The dashboard follows the contours of the air vents is a nice touch with enough feel-good, soft-touch plastics, brushed chrome finishes and slick operating switchgear. In terms of equipment, the C5 Aircross has a 12.3-inch digital cockpit with a digital instrument cluster with modern and retro luck. The 8-inch touchscreen infotainment looks small and at the same time bit difficult to navigate.

The C5 Aircross is available only as a five-seater and, with no option of four-wheel drive, it doesn't really do the ruff and tumble stuff. Instead, it has focused on ride comfort, seat comfort, driving comfort, noise insulation, the C5 takes the stress out of driving. Therefore comfort is the key element of C5 Aircross. The comfort of the car is determined by key elements

like comfortable seats, ride quality by having good suspension, tyres and nicely insulated cabin. Most of the OEMs try to concentrate on any one of the elements, but Citroen has ticked all the boxes.

The seats of the car make you feel like sitting on a sofa due to its high-density foam. The seats offer you great support and keep you comfortable for long hours behind the wheel. It also looks premium due to its unique colour selection of grey grained leather and graphite cloth. The rear passengers also get the utmost comfort with three individual seats which lets you move the seats forwards or backwards or recline them independently. There's enough knee space for the rear passengers, albeit perhaps with tall people who are above 5.8 inches, their knees lightly brushing the backs of the front seats.

The C5 Aircross is best on urban roads. Like other SUVs, C5 also has a MacPherson-strut suspension setup at the front axle, with a torsion beam attached via trailing arms at the back. So what differentiates C5 from its competitors? Along with the regular suspension unit, it gets a 'Progressive Hydraulic Cushions'. The new suspension unit helps in avoiding the jerky blow to the body when the shock absorber rebounds. The hydraulic stops, absorb the shock and help to slow down the action of the shock absorber and make it return to its position in a progressive manner. This innovative technology makes C5 Aircross a more comfortable car. With this the C5 iron out the low-speed firmness to deliver a nice plush ride irrespective of speed. At the same time due to its soft suspension, it is not that much planted and there was enough body roll. But the overall ride



Twin Sun-Roofs make the cabin bright.

The 8-speed automatic reacts promptly when you ask for a burst of acceleration on the move and changes smoothly through its gears.

comfort is clearly top class. Always there is a trade-off, either you get comfort or fun. Citroen has chosen to provide ample comforts since its being the biggest USP of the C5 Aircross.

While the C5 Aircross is comfortable on the highway, it does a pretty good job manoeuvring around the city, too. It also adds more comforts and makes a peaceful long-distance cruiser, stifling wind and road noise. Thanks to the double laminated front windows with an insulating layer and acoustic windshield along with heavy soundproofing for the engine compartment.

The C5 is powered by a 2.0-litre diesel engine making 177PS and 400Nm and mated to an

8-speed Aisin automatic transmission. The power and torque figures are very strong for an SUV of this size. It also comes with multiple drive modes namely Normal, Eco and Sport mode. The 8-speed automatic reacts promptly when you ask for a burst of acceleration on the move and changes smoothly through its gears. You can also take the control of the gearbox through manual paddle-shifters which are mounted on the steering column.

With an overall 33 litres of storage space inside the cabin for holding a lot of water bottles, the boot space is also a best in class with 580 litres expanding to 720 litres with the rear seats pushed forward and opening up to 1630 litres with the seats folded away. Since the floor of the boot is low, it's very easy to feed bulky items in through the large boot aperture and get them back out again.

In spite of having more SUVs on the road, none of them are quite as relaxed on the move as the Citroen C5 Aircross and arguably as good looking, making it a pretty unique proposition. If you're looking for a comfortable family travel, C5 Aircross should definitely be on your parking slot.





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TATA SAFARI COMES

SUVs are now common in India. In the late '80s or early '90s mostly politicians used them because of the bold and tough characteristics of the car. Once the Ambassador started fading out from the market, Tata Motors came up with Tata Sierra and Tata Sumo which were considered (somewhat) of a legend themselves. After seeing the traction for those two cars, Tata Motors came up with Tata Safari in 1998 and it was the first taste of a true 4WD SUV that we got in the country. In fact, it was the first made-in-India 4WD SUV and has evolved to garner tremendous popularity amongst auto enthusiasts in the country. After dominating Indian roads for more than two decades and serving the Indian army due to its tough SUV characteristics Tata Motors discontinued the car in 2019 because of the change in customer preferences and the emergence of compact SUVs.

After a break of two years, Tata Safari is re-entering the Indian market in a completely new avatar. Except for the name, everything is new in the 2021 Safari. The new Safari from Tata Motors is based on the Impact Design 2.0 philosophy and built on the new generation 'Optimal Modular Efficient Global Advanced' Architecture (OMEGA-ARC), which is developed in



IN A NEW AVATAR





Dash is same as Harrier. Oyster White Leatherette looks rich.

collaboration with Jaguar Land Rover. This architecture is derived from the Land Rover D8 architecture and is adapted to suit Indian conditions by Tata engineers.

If you compare the first, the second-generation and the Safari Storm, the 2021 Safari looks completely different. At the same time, a lot of design elements are carried forward from Tata Harrier. In fact, I would say the front fascia looks identical. The signature grill now features the tri-arrow chrome motif encased by the humanity line. There is a small chrome line in between the headlamps and fog lamp. Being 4661mm long, 1894mm wide and 1786mm tall, the Safari is a fairly substantial SUV, to begin with, and the high-set bonnet only gives it more road presence. Like in Harrier the main headlamps in Safari sit lower down on the bumper in a 'tri-arrow' enclosure.

The side and rear profile of the Safari look like a Harrier except few changes to accommodate the third row. It has higher roof lines, longer overhangs, features a full-size quarter glass and bigger tyre size. The 18-inch rims (16-inches on lower trims) looks bigger and suits the bigger wheel arches. The Safari comes with the iconic stepped roof, held between the equally well-regarded roof-rails. Which have been re-imagined making them stylish and functional.



The Instrument cluster is practical.



A/C vents for all the three rows.



The cabin sits at just the right height and you needn't climb aboard the Safari. The Oyster White interior colour scheme along with generous use of Premium Benecke Kalilo Oyster White Perforated Leather seat upholstery and door pad inserts along with the Ashwood on the neatly styled dash looks plush. The free-standing 8.8-inch touchscreen is sleek and even the metal-like element that splits the dash horizontally looks neat. There is scope for improvement in increasing plastic quality. The upper half of the dashboard is all premium and plush but the plastics used in the lower half of the dash seem a bit inferior and out of place. With the competition providing a 10-inch touchscreen, 8.8 inch in Safari looks small. If you crank the music system you will really feel that you are inside a theatre. Thanks to the JBL tuned 320W RMS audio system that comes with 9 speakers (4 speakers, 4 tweeters and 1 subwoofer) and external amplifier. Features like wireless charging and a 360-degree camera have been missed out.

When it comes to the third row, it is not just for kids, even adults have enough leg and headroom. Opening the tailgate is a bit difficult, Tata could have provided automated tailgate opening considering the weight. If all the seats are occupied then there is not enough space for luggage.

The new Safari also gets the best-in-segment panoramic sunroof that comes with a host of convenience and safety features like global close, which means that every time you lock the car the sunroof and the sunshade slide shut automatically. It has anti-pinch as well as rain-sensing auto shut features too. As a continuous improvement Tata has listened to the voice of customers and incorporated features like auto-dimming IRVM, the hard-to-reach USB ports in other Tata SUVs are now easily accessible, there is also an additional USB port in the centre armrest compartment, which is also now a cooled storage box. The passengers in all the rows get a USB port and the third-row passengers can control the AC fan speed. There is ample storage space in the door pockets but the glovebox space is less considering the size of the dashboard.

Drivers sit at a nice height in the Safari, and the commanding position gives a feeling of being in something substantial, which SUV buyers appreciate. The top-end trims come with a 6-way electrically adjustable



OMEGARC architecture vouches for safety



The upshifts are fairly quick



The six seat version has boss seats in the middle row

driver's seat. Occupants seated at the back will have less to complain about. In fact, Tata has retained the old Safari's theatre kind seating arrangement for the second row. Which means the second-row seating is higher than the front row, this allows the passengers to have a great viewing angle. The seat is nice and supportive, there is an enormous feeling of space and you can easily stretch out, thanks to the ample legroom on offer.

The cabin is also wide enough to seat three abreast with ease. Tata has added the 'Boss' mode to enhance the convenience to stretch your legs further and create the space you deserve in the second row. When it comes to the third row, it is not only for kids, even adults have enough leg and headroom. Opening the tailgate is a bit difficult, Tata could have provided automated tailgate opening considering the weight. If all the seats are occupied then there is not enough space for luggage. With various seat folding options, the luggage space can be increased from 73 - 1658 litres.

The new Safari comes with a more powerful engine with added features and an automatic transmission option as well. The 2.0-litre Fiat-sourced 4-cylinder turbocharged diesel engine develops 170PS of power while the torque output is 350 Nm. Along with the 6-speed manual gearbox, it gets a 6-speed torque-converter automatic option. This gearbox has been sourced from Hyundai (seen in the Tucson) and tweaked to suit the Safari. The Safari feels eager off the block and quickly settles into a cruise. The upshifts are fairly quick and at part throttle, you might not even notice it





shift gears. When you gas it for a quick overtake, the automatic kicks down fairly quick to unleash the 350 Nm of torque. It is a breeze to drive in city traffic and when you venture out on the highway, the Safari will hit the three-figure mark in no time and will also cruise at 100kmph under 2,000rpm.

Like other Tata cars, Safari also gets three drive modes - Eco, City and Sport but now it is married to the ESP Terrain Response Modes (Normal, Rough & Wet) for taking on difficult terrains. These Rough and Wet modes have been tweaked to work with the automatic gearbox. Overall, the automatic gearbox seems to work well as it smoothens out the spikes in power delivery. In the Eco and City mode, you

can comfortably drive the Safari, but in Sport, the Safari is allowed to rev freely, although if you cross the 2,500rpm range, the engine noise does tend to seep in. Otherwise, the Safari's cabin is



These Rough and Wet modes have been tweaked to work with the automatic gearbox. Overall, the automatic gearbox seems to work quite well as it eases out the spikes in power delivery.

fairly well insulated from outside noise and NVH levels are low.

The manual gearbox in the Safari does feel livelier. The torque starts peaking from 1,800rpm and the Safari lunges ahead with purpose till 4,000rpm. Slotting the gears requires some additional efforts and could have been smoother. Tata has worked on enhancing refinement and lowering NVH levels and it shows. Engine noise filtering into the cabin has reduced but it still isn't up to the mark when compared with rivals. To accommodate the added weight the suspension has been tuned. The suspension of the Safari is well-tuned and it is very soft to absorb the slow speed bumps.



Since the new Safari is developed on the OMEGA-ARC platform, it has a monocoque body and offers enhanced driving dynamics with a long wheelbase and wide track for greater ride comfort and linear stability.

Considering the 7 seating options the rear twist blade suspension is designed by Lotus Engineering UK to suit Indian conditions.

The steering could have been much better since it was heavy at low speed and tends to kickback. But, at highway speeds, it does not weigh up as expected and that can be a little unnerving around winding roads. The brakes work well, bringing this almost 1800-kg SUV to a halt in an assuring manner. With ESP now standard across trims, it doesn't scuttle under heavy braking. It also has the pre-fill function where the brake pedal stiffens up faster under panic braking as the ESP gauges it using the ramp rate.

Good roads, bad roads, and even no roads, the new SUV impresses with its setup that strikes a nice balance between comfort and being dynamically sharp.

With legendary pedigree running through its veins, 'Tata Safari' promises to shatter all current benchmarks and pave entirely new standards for SUVs in India. This is in line with the well-defined go-to-market strategy. The previous generation Tata Safari was built on the body-on-frame construction where there is plenty of body-roll. Since the new Safari is developed on the OMEGA-ARC platform, it has a monocoque body and offers enhanced driving dynamics with a long wheelbase and wide track for greater ride comfort and linear stability. The platform also benefits from the D8's future-proofing. The platform is not only ready for an all-wheel-drive train but can also be configured with a battery pack in the floor bed for an electrified powertrain. So we can expect both AWD and electric on the Safari if there is a demand from customers in the near future.





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Ather 450 X Power Bank

With the forever increasing price of petrol and diesel, electric vehicles are the future. Ather is perfectly placed to take advantage of that transition for consumers.

Many decades ago, Indian agriculture created a Green Revolution. Today Ather Energy, with its E-scooters, is all set to repeat the same in its own style.

Electric vehicles proudly flaunt the colour green on the number plates. But, the new Ather 450X itself is dipped in green, a shade named 'Mint'. The Ather design team has sculptured futuristic looks and innovative design. The sleek front apron with carved LED headlight, LED DRL, 12-inch wheels with disc brakes, and even rear-view mirrors speak a uniform design language.



Bluetooth / Wi-Fi features in the touch screen



Sleek front apron is cute



It takes nearly 5.45 hours to charge the battery to 100 percent by wall mounted charger



The rear view is equally impressive.



Easy to use switches



12 inch wheels are same as the 450.



LED headlamps gels with the design



The aluminium touch



The old 450 had 2.71kWh of power, while the 450X has 2.9kWh. The range is also considerably higher. That is, up to 85 km in Eco mode. Currently, full charging takes 3.5 hours and the quick charging takes 45 minutes.



The 450X has a new lithium-ion battery with increased battery capacity. The motor is also well-tuned to deliver speed readily. The old 450 had 2.71kWh of power. The 450X got 2.9kWh. The range is also considerably higher. That is, up to 85 km in Eco mode. Currently, full charging takes 3.5 hours and the quick charge takes 45 minutes. Ather is working on getting this to below 30 minutes in the next few years.

The highlight is that Ather's performance is almost at par with 125cc scooters. Ather accelerates from 0-40 kmph in just 3.3 seconds. 6.5 seconds for 0-60 kmph. Wow! It can hit a top speed of 80 kmph.

The waiting period of Ather is nearly 3 months. This is in spite of the fact that its factory in Hosur push out 1,10,000 scooters annually and 1,20,000 battery packs. This is a massive jump from their previous production capability of 32000 scooters a year from their Bengaluru factory.

The pricing of the Ather 450 Plus is Rs. 1,39,990 and Ather 450X is Rs. 1,59,000. Ather believes that the company can reduce the price once volumes increase and there is a wider adoption of E-vehicles in the market. And the good news is this doesn't attract any road tax like any other electric scooters.

Ather which is present in 6 Indian cities (Mumbai, Pune, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chennai, and Hyderabad) now, is planning to expand its touch points to another 21 cities around April. By the end of the year, the company targets selling in 40 cities by investing Rs 635 crores in the next 5 years.

We keenly await this new green revolution from the house of Ather... Are you ready for the same?



Himalayan Adventure



Royal Enfield launched the updated Himalayan ADV. There is fierce competition in the adventure bike segment such as the KTM 250 Adventure, Hero Xpulse 200, and the BMW G310GS. With more practicality in mind, Royal Enfield made some changes to the bike. Do they give the expected benefit? We found out as we took it on a dirt excursion.

The Himalayan console gets the same Tripper Navigation System we saw on the Meteor 350. This small rounded colour display accurately indicates turn-by-turn navigation to the rider. With the help of Royal Enfield's mobile app and Bluetooth, you can use this feature.

The size and shape of the metal frame around the 15-liter petrol tank is reduced. The problem of it hitting the rider's knee is no longer there as was evident while hard braking. The firmer cushioning on the split seats helps ride longer distances. The metal rack on the rear of the pillion seat gets a metal plate mounted on top, with a weight capacity of 7 kg.

Himalayan has a 411 cc oil-cooled engine that delivers 24bhp @ 6,500rpm of power - 32Nm @ 4,500rpm of torque. This 2 valves - Long Stroke engine is mated to a 5-speed gearbox. When cruising at 80-100 kmph, the bike offers a relaxed experience. As the engine runs smoothly, the Himalayan can reach a max speed of up to 120 km/h. Of course, in the dirt, we weren't riding anywhere close to those speeds, but we were utilising all the bottom end torque available.

Despite the large 21-inch wheel (90/90 size tire) and 1,465mm wheelbase, the Himalayan is not difficult to handle. Combined with the Long Travel suspension and 220mm ground clearance, it is an off-road capable product, as we experienced.

The 2021 Himalayan, which is priced at Rs 2.01 lakh ex-showroom Chennai, has been launched at a price of around Rs 10,000 more than the previous model. But comparatively, Himalayan is cheaper than its competitors and when it comes to off-road capability and on-road practicality the Himalayan stands high in the ADVT segment.



Ceat tyres handle all kind of terrains with ease



New design of the visor gives a fresh look



Added extra cushion for more comfort

SIVAGURUNATHAN

 DHANASEKARAN

INCREDIBLE JOURNEY TO AN UNNAMED WATERFALL!

TIRUPUR - KANDALUR



“**B**ro! We are yet to experience a ‘Great Escape’ with a Tiago. I know that you have covered the Lakkam falls near Marayur in a Ford Endeavour; Thoovanam forest in a Honda Amaze. But you’ve missed a great spot close by. Our favorite vacation place, an unexplored waterfall! My daddy takes me there all the time. Do you want to come, explore the place with us?”, asked 11-year-old Ashwath.

How could I say no to this request!

I was glad to accept. We hit the road early in the morning with Ashwath as our tour guide. We crossed Udumalai and were creeping on the forest road

Name: Sundaramani, Nagajothi ● Town: Tiruppur ● Occupation: Government School Teachers
● Car: Tata Tiago Petrol ● Destination: Kandalur (on the way to Munnar)
● Travel distance: about 275 km ● Mileage achieved: 22 km (Average)

to Munnar via Marayur as nature unraveled in front of our eyes! What made the experience more blissful is the symphony of waterfalls echoing from all directions. Unwilling to hold his excitement, our guide, Ashwath kept adding what he liked about the place and of course the Tiago. "A few features are missing. Otherwise, it's a great car", he added.

Ashwath's father Sundaramani is a school teacher in a Government School. His wife Nagajothi is a teacher too. We took the day off to visit this exotic place once again! Shall we go? While Sundaramani exclaimed, his wife Jothi, and their twins-- Ashwath and Ashmitha -- took their seats in the car! And, there started our journey in Tiago to our unnamed waterfall!

It was 06:59, a minute earlier than our scheduled time, when we powered the engine and enabled the automatic climate control. "This is still my sleep time. I woke early because I want the maximum out of this trip!", said the exuberant Ashwath as we took off from

Tirupur.

Mr. Sundaramani, his wife Mrs. Nagajothi, and the twins - Ashwath & Ashmitha

We crossed Pollachi and stopped for breakfast in Arya Bhavan. Then we arrived at Marayur Checkpost in no time.

Before reaching Marayur, one needs to check out the Thirumoorthy Dam and Falls at Pollachi. It is a good spot for a photoshoot. There we wondered whether we had arrived at the holy place, Pazhani! Barring us, all we could see were devotees in saffron. They were probably on a pilgrimage.

We entered the place and were warned by the ticketer: "Be careful of monkeys! They'll even snatch your handbags." And, it did happen just like how he'd foretold. A monkey featuring mohawk style hair was quick enough to grab the handbag of a lady. What we saw next was even more bizarre. Our four-legged thief threw the bag after carefully taking out all the money in



it. "You didn't tell me that monkeys could steal money, daddy", shouted Ashmitha in awe.

Thirumoorthy Falls was filled with devotees, who couldn't find time to relish the melody of the falls and the adventurous trek. But we did. All the time in the world to halt wherever we found a nice background, and clicked hundreds of memories.

With Ashwath and Ashmitha, we went for traditional snacks like Ilandha Vadai, Maanga Badhai, and Goli Soda before setting off for Marayur. The route had 4 check posts with Tamil Nadu and Kerala equally dividing them. In both the Tamil Nadu check posts, we were charged Rs. 50, whereas the Kerala check-post officers said "No toll, but... avoid plastics please".



Mr. Sundaramani with his wife Mrs. Nagajothi, and the twins - Ashwath & Ashmitha

A few meters past the check post, we were reminded of the Elephant - as big as an Endeavour - that crossed our path last time we were there. "Bro! This is the spot where you spotted a leopard right?" Ashwath took us down memory lane!

We approached yet another check post. But no sign of a waterfall yet. Driving past the check post, I could hear water gushing down the rocks. I stopped the car and saw a board which said "Erumachaaadi Waterfalls". Hardly any crowd. After a quick shower and a few cups of lemon tea, it was time for another photoshoot at Erumachaaadi.

Ooh... I forget to mention the Thoovanam Falls located enroute. The adventurous trek, a stay in the forest and a brisk shower at the falls is certainly one of a kind experience. We finally



Watch out for the Leeches!



Scenic beauty of Thirumoorthy Dam



Thirumoorthy Dam - Great spot for a photoshoot.

crossed Marayur and reached Kanthalloor. This is the place where you can spot Kurinji flowers, which bloom once every twelve years! It'll take another 12 years before Motor Vikatan can capture both Kurinji flowers and cars in the same frame!

It certainly is an amazing experience to stay at places like Kanthalloor and Marayur. You open your room windows to see water spray into your room. The place is filled with a host of waterfalls. Watch out for the rainy season as the uproar of the waterfalls can be intense. You could stay at the Govt. Forest House at Thoovanam. Else, you can choose between plenty of homestays available in the locality. Finding a cottage in close proximity to the falls is the real deal!

Marayur isn't all just about the waterfalls. There's something else to look out for. Naturally extracted jaggery from sugarcane is a signature product of Marayur. As the smell of freshly brewing jaggery teased our olfactory senses, we couldn't resist buying a few packets of fresh jaggery.

The way to Kanthalloor wasn't easy. The occasional hairpin bends test your driving skills. Driving amongst heavily loaded vehicles carrying huge piles of wood, is by no means easy. I can only imagine how difficult this can be for lorry drivers.

We were greeted by the scent of sandalwood along the way. Imagine driving in the midst of 65,000 sandalwood trees. "They would have certainly cut all of these if it were our place", said Jothi in a concerned tone. "But not a chance here. Every tree is embedded with a chip which alerts forest officers when any damage happens to the tree. The guilty will be penalized", she added.

"This is the way to go," said Mr. Sundaramani. We stopped at a place with no signboards of any sort. Walking down the road, we could see traces of a waterfall. We had a thrilling trek ahead of us. Though there was no danger of animals crossing our path, the very seclusion of the place made it adventurous.

Down the hill we continued trekking and after 500 odd meters, we arrived at the Unnamed Waterfall. And, it was stunning. One could even argue that this place is as good as Athirapally for the magnanimous uproar of the surging water that hit the land. Ashwath jumped right in and posed for the camera with a sense of accomplishment.

"Why don't you give a name to this place?" The natives of the village were amazed as to how we found the spot. Even they didn't have a clue about

HOW'S TIAGO?

A superb option for a middle-class budget. "With the XM.3 cylinder in my car, you can't expect great performance from the Revotron engine. But you get 84 bhp power output! This is a car for the highways. I am quite satisfied with the 22 km mileage I am getting. With eco mode, you get even more, but I prefer the city mode", said Mr. Sundaramani. He added, "I have become a fan of Tata's new designs. I absolutely love the aerodynamics in my Tiago. Though I would like to see a few more features -- like side mirror adjuster, rear A.C vent, and better fit & finish in some spots -- added, this perhaps is a very good choice for a family like ours."





In the Udumalpet to Munnar route, don't miss exploring Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary. A great trekking spot. Kerala govt has made all arrangements for the trek. One has to cross 5 check posts to reach Marayur. Once you set foot on this fairyland, you could spot a waterfall in whichever direction you look. Quite the place for travel enthusiasts. Find a cottage in close proximity to the falls. Trekking lovers take note: get permission from Kerala govt for stay at Thoovanam Falls (09188398047) for a life-time experience. If you missed out on this, you have decent homestays available close by. Cascades and waterfalls all around the place and the presence of Kurinji flowers (once in twelve years though) make this a great tourist spot. Avoid travelling to this place at night. The next time you set off to Munnar, don't forget to add Marayur-Kanthalloor as your pit-stop!

its name! We exchanged pleasantries with the locals as they let us proceed with a friendly warning to be cautious. "Can we name this Asmitha-Ashwath Falls?" asked the naughty Asmitha who otherwise kept to herself throughout the journey.

The beauty of the place is elevated by the presence of tiny cascades which looked as cute as a baby elephant. This place is a selfie lover's paradise: a picture with this scenic background is surely the recipe for a great Insta pic!

One final shower in the falls before we departed to Tirupur. "Uncle! I heard that Kia Motors is launching their Carnival soon. I'll ask my Daddy to buy it. I'm sure by the time he buys it, I'll be old enough to get a driver's license" giggled Ashwath. "Get ready for yet another Great Escape with the Carnival" he added.

What's around? (From Marayur)

- 📍 T* Thoovanam Falls (5 km)
You need a guide's support to trek closer to the falls. Lucky folks would spot a few animals along the way.
- 📍 Anamudi Chozha National Park (19 km)
Jeep Safari Available. Nilgiris Thar can be spotted.
- 📍 Munnar Falls (39 km)
Amazing hill station. Along with boating, trekking, one could enjoy the pleasant climate.
- 📍 Lakkam Falls (13 km)
Arguably the best spot at Marayur.
- 📍 Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary (9 km)
Kerala govt provides all the facilities for trekking there. With jeep rides, you can spot a variety of animals!
- 📍 Sandalwood Forest (2 km)
Imagine the scent of 65,000 odd Sandalwood trees in one spot!
- 📍 Muniyara Dolmens (2 km)
They say this place belonged to the Pandavas. The place has burial chambers built with large stone slabs.
- 📍 Kanthallur (14 km)
Where you can spot Kurinji flowers once in 12 years. You also get jeep rides. With a host of viewpoints, you can relish the scenic beauty of Kerala.



AVINASH NORONHA

📷 CHAITRA BHAGAVAN & AVINASH NORONHA

UTTARAKHAND: HEAVEN ON EARTH



This northern Himalayan state of the country is known as the abode of the Gods. The people also truly believe in 'Athithi Devo Bhava', Sanskrit for, our guests are the equivalent of God.

Cycling through these pristine mountains, does make you feel like one when showered with the love of the people. At the same time, these rugged mountains can be incredibly challenging even for the most diehard cyclist.

We were fortunate to ride through these blessed lands on our bicycles for a fortnight. Truly experiencing heaven on earth.

The ride started and ended in Dehradun, perfect, since it has great connectivity for people travelling from around the country. Chaitra, my riding partner on this trip, in fact flew from Bangalore to experience the bliss of these hills.

Our route took us through snow, views of holy snow-covered peaks, forests roads of the famous Jim Corbett park, pine forests, dirt roads and everything else in between. We rode from Dehradun to Mussoorie to Tehri Lake to Karnaprayag to Kausani to Ranikhet to Corbett to Lansdowne and finally back to Dehradun via Rishikesh, covering roughly 800 km and climbing more than 12000 metres!

Here's our travel captured in a handful of snaps, which we hope will inspire and entice you to go experience these mountains on your own...



At this altitude you are always closer to the sun! Here's our first sunset in the Himalayas from the touristy town of Mussoorie.



The bikes getting up, close and personal with the Trishul Range of peaks. This was on the way to Kausani, a hill station, known for providing gorgeous views of the Himalayan Mountain range.



The view from Kausani. Trishul and Nanda Devi are the famous peaks visible in this picture, amongst others. You can also see the sparse villages in the green hills.



A bicyclist is nothing but a spec in the grand scheme of things in the Himalayas. Here we are riding through pine forests. Roads are perfect even in the middle of nowhere, away from the main highways.





You can see a range of hills in the distance with mist rolling magically over them. The gathering clouds point to a promise of worsening weather and sleet.



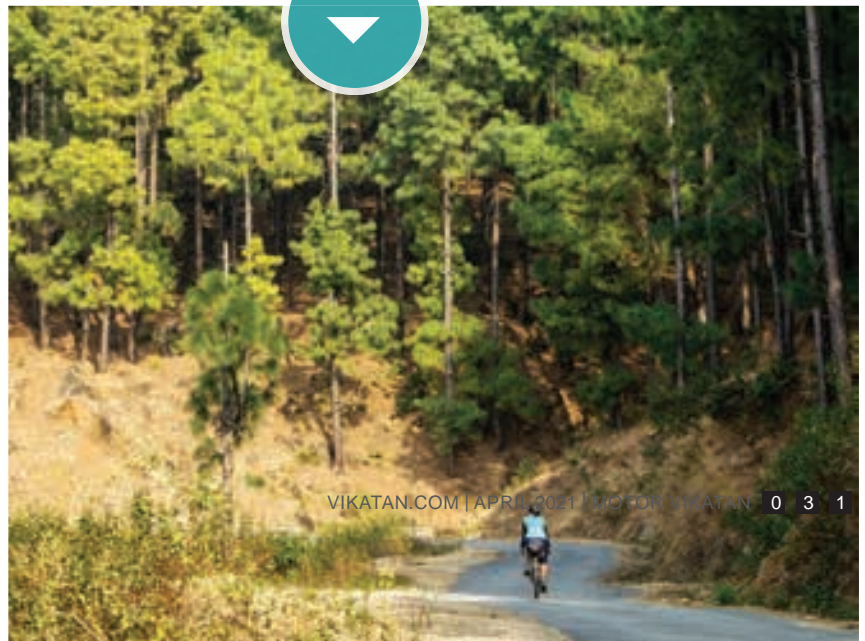
Though the climbs in the hills are tough, they are magical. What with the sun forever playing hide and seek with you! The weather is perfect for climbing with the shade of the trees and warmth of the sun maintaining natural 'climate control', which you otherwise pay for in your automobiles...



Higher up in the Himalayas, you can spot perennial snow-covered peaks in the distance. The high hills are evident by the cluster of pine trees.



Narrow roads, devoid of traffic was the nature of this entire route. Most of our riding was done through pine forests. The hills are brown with pine needles, with a canopy of lush green trees.





A challenging off road section near the Jim Corbett forest reserve. Steep inclines on loose mud can make a cyclist's life difficult. We were also informed by locals, that a tiger had been spotted in the area and it was best not to be on the road during sunset!



The day after getting caught in a blizzard. The hills were covered with snow and we had to wait for the ice to melt from the black asphalt before we could risk riding on our bicycles. Riding on black ice is arguably the riskiest form of two wheeled riding. Be it bicycle or motorcycle.



The ancient Baijnath temple in Uttarakhand. A temple where the white snow peaks are juxtaposed against the grey brown stone walls of the holy place.





Price:
₹29,999

Realme X7 Pro 5G

Features:

- 6.55 Inch Full HD+ AMOLED display
- MediaTek Dimensity 1000+ processor
- 8 GB RAM + 128 GB storage
- 64 MP + 8 MP + 2 MP +2 MP rear camera
- 32 MP selfie camera
- 4500 mAh battery
- Android 10
- 5G support

Plus:

- Performance
- Fast charging
- Display

Minus:

- Camera quality could be better

One line review:

- Those who want to experience flagship performance in the mid-range segment must try this. There are not many cons and is value for money.





Oppo Reno 5 Pro 5G

Features:

- 6.55 Inch Super AMOLED display
- MediaTek Dimensity 1000+ processor
- 8 GB RAM + 128 GB storage
- 64 MP + 8 MP + 2 MP + 2 MP rear camera
- 32 MP selfie camera
- 4350 mAh battery
- Android 11
- 5G support

Plus:

- Camera quality
- Fast charging
- Built design

Minus:

- Price

One line review:

- Value for money. Yet there are more options at a lower price point than this one. Realme X7 Pro has the same features for lesser money.



Price:
₹ 35,990





Samsung Galaxy S21 Ultra:

Features:

- 6.8 inch Quad HD+ display
- Exynos 2100 processor
- 12 GB RAM + 256 GB storage
- 108 MP + 12 MP + 10 MP + 10 MP rear camera
- 40 MP selfie camera
- 5000 mAh battery
- Android 10
- 5G support

Plus:

- Dynamic 6.8 Inch AMOLED display
- Great performance
- Best camera

Minus:

- Price
- Bit bulky

One line review:

- This is one of the flagship mobiles of Samsung and a premium mobile in the android segment. Those who aren't bothered by the price tag, go for it. Otherwise there are other models, such as Galaxy S21 and S21+. But features are less for the price.

Price:
12 GB RAM + 256 GB Storage
₹1,05,999





Zebronics Zeb Sound Bomb Q Pro



Price:
₹3,999

Features:

Bluetooth version 5
Qualcomm aptX support

Plus:

Best audio experience
Wireless charging option

Minus:

Could be better if it had 'Gesture
Controls'

One line review:

It is a good choice for those who
want wireless earbuds under
Rs 4000

