

Family Hotel Review: Kipling Camp, Madhya Pradesh, India

Surrounded by the jungle, this renowned family-run camp is the true wildlife enthusiasts' destination.

Best For: Jeep Safaris, elephant rides and life in the Great Outdoors; little kids, big kids & teens.

Reviewed by: Diana Furth



Overview

Why You'll Love It

Kipling Camp isn't just a wildlife resort, it is also a home to one of **India's premier conservation families**. Established in 1982 as the first of its kind by Bob and Anne Wright, it is now run by Anne and their daughter Belinda, whose relentless fight for the **survival of the Indian Tiger** has proven invaluable. Photos, scrapbooks, a documentary screening as well as the knowledgeable Manager and dedicated Staff, some of whom

have been with the family a lifetime, kept us enthralled with the **history of the area** and the majestic Tiger.

The **cottages are set among the trees**, nicely spaced out so you can easily relax in privacy on your veranda or hammock and at the same time always keep an eye on the children running about as they must not wander off unattended. We visited with children ranging in age from 5 to 17, keeping themselves busy never seemed to be a problem. Mealtimes are convivial with passionate discussions on the merits of a **tiger or leopard sighting** and a reviving drink around the campfire just adds to the atmosphere. There is enough space to choose between mingling with the other guests and keeping to oneself. Kipling's layout lends itself perfectly to **groups of friends** travelling together or to the family looking for peace and quiet. For those who need to keep in touch with the office or their blog, WiFi is available.

Why The Kids Will Love It

Back to nature for the kids and do they love it! What more could a child of any age ask for than a **safari in an open jeep** searching for the surprisingly not so elusive Tiger, followed by a ride on **Tara the elephant** and a swim with her in the river. Scrubbing clean a docile Tara lying in the water is a priceless experience and the photo of the year for us parents! Make sure to leave an afternoon free for Tara as she does not go down to the river in the morning.

Back at camp, children busy themselves spoiling **Kim the Labrador** who gladly laps up all the attention. No one minds the little naturalists running about **searching for bugs and monkeys** and the older children can also enjoy a game of **volleyball** or just relaxing in the *shamiana* with a book or if need be, connect to the internet through the camp's free WiFi.

A guided nature walk starting from the camp is not only fun but educational for all ages. Staff are approachable and friendly, children immediately feel at home and inevitably make friends with the other families staying at camp.

Kipling Camp is open from mid-October to early May as the Kanha Tiger Reserve closes during the rainy season. It is recommended to ask Kipling Camp to book your Safaris as early as possible as entry to the Reserve is limited.

**I was kindly offered a complimentary night's stay at Kipling Camp, all other expenses were paid for personally. All opinions in this review are entirely my own and would happily return to Kipling Camp on my own rupee.*

Hotel Details

Rooms:

The heart of Kipling Camp is the central open *Shamiana*, set up as a lovely living room, dining and bar area, complete with a large selection of books and magazines to be enjoyed around the two firepits.

Paths lead up to **traditional cottages**, each with their own veranda and a hammock strung up between two trees. The **14 rooms** are comfortably furnished with single or double beds, a/c in the summer, heaters in the winter, cozy warm quilts and mosquito nets.

Coffee and tea making facilities are provided as well as hot water bottles during the colder months. Hot water is plentiful in the good size en-suite bathrooms and should there be any power cuts a large generator is on standby, although the provided flashlight is more popular with the kids.

Best rooms for families: Rooms with a double bed are large enough to add an extra single bed for a family of three. For families of four or more, ask for the **two connecting rooms, Neem and Palash** or the **private Cottage**, which has a large veranda overlooking the lake. The veranda faces away from the Shamiana and therefore offers more privacy and great early morning deer and bird watching, however, it does make it more difficult to keep an eye on younger children.

Food:

Breakfast and lunch are served outside, often under the watchful eyes of the playful langur monkeys in the trees above. **Dinner** is served in the *shamiana* after drinks, snacks and lively conversation have been enjoyed around the fire. One or two large tables are set and mealtimes are truly enjoyable occasions, a blend of good food and great companionship.

Breakfast while on safari, is served up on a spotless tablecloth placed on the bonnet of your jeep, a well-earned break in a full morning's jungle drive. At camp a lazy lie-in is quite acceptable and breakfast, eggs, cereal, even (real) marmite on toast will be prepared according to your order when you are ready for it.

Lunch and dinner are buffet style, but the accommodating staff are quite happy to serve those too engrossed in their thoughts of tigers and elephants to serve themselves. There is no menu, food is simple, non-spicy and alternates between basic Indian dishes most children will eat and western staples. We enjoyed some lovely locally caught fresh fish, a real surprise. The staff are open to any requests and will do their best within the availabilities in the area to ensure children and parents alike enjoy all meals. It is worth informing the camp before arrival of any specific dietary requirements.

For Kids: There is no dedicated kids' menu, however the staff do their utmost to ensure children enjoy all meals.

Activities:

Activities for Parents

Open Jeep Safari in Kanha Tiger Reserve. Tiger sightings are common though not guaranteed and should you be one of the few who leaves without a tiger sighting the multitude of other animal and bird species you are guaranteed to spot easily makes up for it. Morning and afternoon rides should be booked well in advance and we highly recommend letting Kipling Camp do it for you. There is a cost for the jeep and driver as well as a government charge covering your park entry and the official naturalist who must accompany all vehicles entering the park.

Other activities include **guided nature walks**, jeep rides through the neighbouring villages, **visits to the local village market** (only on Wednesday), screenings of Belinda Wrights' documentary on the plight of the Indian tiger, a **tribal dance** evening at the camp and walks to the **Banjar River** with or without Tara for a refreshing swim.

Best of all after a full day of activity, enjoy a generous drink and a **good book by the fire** or in the comfort of a gently swaying hammock while the children are busy entertaining each other with their latest adventures.

Activities for Kids

Kipling Camp is all about **the outdoors**, communing with nature, and for our city kids, a wonderful **re-energising breath of fresh air**. It offers an escape from the everyday distractions of television and iPads, allowing children to discover and learn about the intricacies of the animal and plant world around them. Left to their own devices our group built a house out of sticks for the huge millipede they found, and happily played with Kim the Labrador.

The **morning safaris** are longer than the afternoon outings and for smaller children or those with a short attention span they might prove testing. Our 5 and 6 year olds had a quick nap on parents' laps during the first part of the morning and were re-energised as the sun came up. One safari a day tends to be enough for the smaller children and with enough to do around camp it is worth leaving them time, especially for an afternoon with **Tara the elephant**.

Other activities include the **Banjar River**, within easy walking distance on foot or elephant back, that is a delight straight out of **The Jungle Book**. Children believe they are Mowgli, jumping and swimming in the clean water, building sandcastles on the riverbanks and helping with Tara's daily scrub as if born to it.

Facilities:

AC, common rooms, doctors & hospitals, extra beds, inter-connecting rooms, kids' activities, laundry service, pets allowed, pushchair friendly, wheelchair access, WiFi.

Rates:

Rates vary according to room type, extra bed requests and date of travel. Please contact the hotel directly for an exact quote based on your family's requirements.

Disclaimer: At the time of reviewing Kipling Camp, Tara the elephant was present. However, animals do grow and move on! As outlined in our [Terms & Conditions](#), globetotting.com cannot be responsible for any information that is out of date. We recommend checking Tara's availability directly with Kipling Camp at time of booking.

Travel Information

When to go:

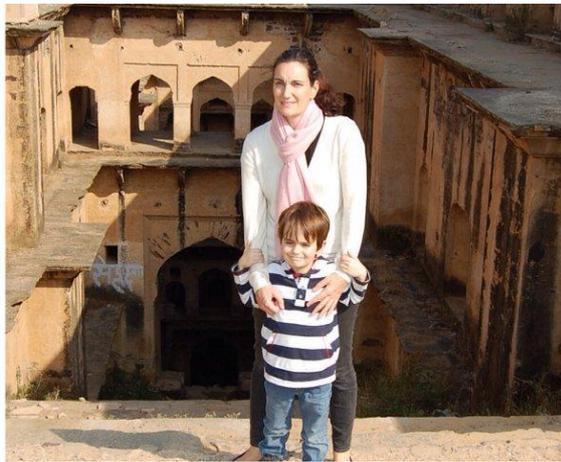
Kanha is beautiful throughout the season, and Tigers can be sighted anytime. Winters are very cold at night, however days warm up considerably. The best time for Tiger and Wildlife spotting is in **March and April**, the dry-season, when thirsty animals come down to the waterholes. But beware, during this period daytime temperatures can reach above 40C.

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Location & Travel:

Kipling Camp is located in Kisli-Kanha, minutes from the entrance of the Kanha Tiger Reserve. It is approx. 3 hours drive from the **airport and train station in Jabalpur**. The hotel will arrange transfers, usually by Toyota Innova with known drivers, for an additional fee. Part of the road is quite bumpy and curves through a low-lying mountain range, children (or adults) easily prone to car sickness should be prepared.

Reviewed By...



Reviewed by: [Diana Furth](#)

Brought up in Geneva Switzerland by parents for whom worldwide travel was an integral part of life, Diana continues to follow in the same path travelling extensively with her son between Europe and Asia. After graduating from a Swiss Hotel and Tourism Management school she lost no time in moving to Dubai to work in PR and Marketing and then India, finally settling in New Delhi. She now works with local artists manufacturing home accessories for her company Taj Style.

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