Take a drive back to the 7th century into Malla Dynasty along with serenade nature
Bankura: A green tryst with Dokra

Bankura district, which forms a part of the eastern Chhota Nagpur plateau, has been decorated by nature with her own hands. There are old brown hills, gleaming rivers, ancient temples, monuments and art forms here that are the repositories of the culture and tradition of Bankura. Bankura has several tourism circuits covering mesmerizing tourist destinations with their own charm.

Susunia Hill

Susunia hill, just 20 km. from Bankura, is a very popular trekking destination. It is also an important tourist destination for those who visit the place to see “Susunia Dhara” (a natural spring) and also the Chandavaran inscriptions. Excavation has revealed the inscriptions dating back to 4th century AD.

Biharinath Hill

Bounded by Purulia and river Damodar on both sides, Biharinath hill in Bankura is the tallest hill of Bankura. Covered in thick forests, Biharinath blooms with the shades of “Kaash Phool”, Shimul and Palash during seasons.

Ekteshwar Temple

Just two miles south east of Bankura, on the left bank of Darakeshwar River, is the temple of Ekteshwar (Unifier Shiva). The temple was built of laterite and terracotta plaques. The temple us dedicated to Shiva and inside the shrine, a large lingam is supposed to have thrust its way up through the ground.

Bikna: Tryst with Dokra

The ancient craft of dokra (cire perdue, or lost wax) metal casting was once widespread throughout India, but is now restricted to a small number of groups of traditional artisans. Bikna village, 5 km. from Bankura, is the center of this restricted craft in Eastern India. The dokra artisans are descendants of artists migrated from Madhya Pradesh and now only 36 families are left with this rare skill of dokra making. The main hallmark of dokra craft is primitive simplicity, charming folk motifs, a rustic beauty and imaginative designs. A visit to Bikna will enrich you about this ancient art form and the beauty of it.
“Abhibyekti” - Home of rare arts in Chhandar

The village Chhhandar, 20 Km. from Bankura, is the birthplace of famous artist Jamini Roy. Another famous artist of Bankura, Ramkinkar Beij- the pioneer of modern Indian sculpture was born in Jogipara, not far from there. Chhandar is in the district tourist map now for the organization “Abhibyekti”. It was founded in 1978, following the concept of Shantiniketan. In memory of the famous artist duo, there are two workshop rooms- Jamini Roy and Ramakinkar Bhaban. Arrangements are simple and basic but they have a fascinating goal of carrying on Bengal’s old arts through terracotta, “Pot” drawing, sculpture, painting based on different folk cultures like “Tusu”, “Bhadu”, “Jhumur”, “Manasa Mangal” etc. Tourists should not miss out the architectural representations of Khiradaprasad Vidyavinod Mancha, temple Dharmraj and the two main buildings named after Jamini Roy and Ramkinkar Beij.

Mukutmanipur

Mukutmanipur - Jhilimili circuit has become the most attractive tourist destination in Bankura district. The second biggest earthen dam in India, Mukutmanipur is 55 Km. away from Bankura (a 2 hours drive) District Head Quarters and is situated at the confluence of river Kangsabati and Kumari.

Green forests and hillocks surround the vast bluish tract of water. The undulating terrain along the southern edge of the Kangsabati Water Reservoir extends as a three-dimensional necklace of green and terracotta colour. the stand still water of the reservoir look like a large blue tinted glass mirror reflecting the vast sky over it. The view of the sunset with the lake on the background is always breath taking. You must also experience the moonlit nights around the reservoir. The surface of the static eater turns into a shiny silvery plate gifted by God.

Jhilimili

Jhilimili is only 15 Km. away from Mukumanipur. It is a beautiful, undisturbed dense natural forest. The road from Ranibandh to Jhilimili offers a wonderful view of spectacular forests on varying heights on both sides, finally reaching Jhilimili, which is mounted on the top of a hillock. The sparkle of micaceous soil adds to the beauty of the environment. Small tribal villages in and around the forest is another charm to the place.
Bishnupur: The land of temples and Terracotta

Bishnupur is the temple town and paradise of Terracotta crafts. Bishnupur is also the place of “Baluchari” masterpieces and renowned music of Seni Ghrana. Bishnupur was the capital of 7th century Mallabhum kingdom. It was founded by Adi-Malla alias Raghunath, also the founder of Malla dynasty. Raghunath’s descendant Jagat Malla shifted his capital to Bishnupur. The fame and glory of Bishnupur rose to its peak under the rule of Bir Hambir, the 49th king of Mallabhum. He was contemporary with Akbar. The town has a glorious past that is reflected in its rich architecture, music and handicrafts such as pottery and weaving. Bishnupur developed a unique form of architecture and has perhaps the most brilliant and detailed terracotta work in Eastern India has withstood the ravages of time.

Rasmancha

Rasmancha was built in 1600 AD by Bir Hambir for the “Ras Festival” of Lord Krishna. The temple is one of its kind in India. The pedestal of this temple is built of laterite stone and the upper portion is of burnt bricks. Architecturally this temple is a fusion of three different styles; the upper portion is like a pyramid, the middle portion is like traditional Bengali hut and the lower portion resembles Islamic architecture.

Jore Bangla Temple of Keshto Rai

The Jore Bangla temple resembles two thatched huts joined together and surmounted by a single tower. This temple in brick was built by Malla king Raghunath in 1655. The entire outer surface of the temple is decorated with terracotta plaques displaying various aspects of human life, culture, gods and goddesses, animals, floral and geometrical designs. One will also find “Naba Naree Kunjar”- nine women compromised in an elephant, a unique mythological piece of art.
**Shyam Rai Temple**

Built in 1643 by king Raghunath, Shyam Rai temple has the most intricate sculptural details amongst all the Bishnupur temples. Shyam Rai Temple is an example of the Pancha Ratna (meaning five gems) architecture. The gems in this temple are the four small towers and one main tower that build the Temple. The architecture of this Temple is unique in its own way and is one of the highest prioritized monuments of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

**Madan Mohan Temple**

This picturesque temple was completed under Malla king Durjon Singh in the year 1694. The temple has a four-facet summit. The deity of this temple is Madanmohan, originally brought from Birbhum. The original idol was later shipped to Kolkata. New installation of idol was carried on later days. This temple stands apart with its distinctive terracotta works. On the lower face of the temple Hindu mythology, Krishnalila Dasavatar are mainly detected in baked clay tiles. The upper part of the temple depicts war-scene.

**Terracotta trail**

The exquisite craftsmanship of the terracotta artisans is evident in the temples of Bishnupur. But if you want to experience the how the master artisans are putting up their craftsmanship on display, you have to visit Panchmura and Uliwara villages. Panchmura is just 20 km. from Bishnupur and is the hub of terracotta artisans in Eastern India. You will find the famous “Bankura Horse” and different terracotta tiles, each of them telling a different story.

**Souvenirs**

Bishnupur is the hub for one of the most exquisite textile crafts known as the “Baluchari” saris. You can also collect the famous “Dasavatar Tash” and “Pot” from Bishnupur. “Dasavatar Tash” is very unique and rare as you will not find it anywhere else.
Other destinations to add on

- Sutan forest, Ranibandh and Eco Park, Taldangra (15 Km. from Mukumanipur)
- Malleshwar Temple: Dedicated to Lord Shiva, it is the oldest temple in Bishnupur.
- Kalachand Temple: It is of Ekratna style and is on the bank of Lal-Bandh
- Dihar: It is famous for the Saileshwar and Sareshwar temples on the bank of River Darakeshwar and just 8 Km. from Bishnupur
- Bahulara: Famous Siddheshwar Shiva temple, just 25 Km. from Bishnupur
- Gokulnagar: Just 40 minutes from Bishnupur, there is a huge beautiful Pancharatna temple of Gokuleshwar.
- Joypur: Two terracotta temples and scenic forest are enchanting. Joypur is near to Gokulnagar.
- Jayrambati and Kamarpukur: Jairambati and Kamarpukur are birthplaces of Maa Saradamani and Sri Ramkrishna. The famous temple of Singha Devi and Mayerpukur in from of the residential house of Maa Sarada are main attractions.

How to reach

**By Road:**

1. From Kolkata travel to Dankuni, take the Durgapur Expressway. After reaching Durgapur, take State Highway-9 to go to Bankura. (Distance: 211 Km.)
2. From Kolkata travel to Dankuni, take the Durgapur Expressway, at Ratanpur crossing turn left and take the Sheoraphuli-Tarakeshwar road, go straight through Arambagh and Bishnupur to Bankura. (Distance: 174 Km.)

**By Train:** Several trains travel from Kolkata (Howrah) to Bankura through Bishnupur. 12883-Rupasi Bangla Express; 12885 Aranyak Express (Ex. Sunday); 12817-Howrah Purulia Express; 58011-HowrahChakradharpur Passenger.

Accommodation

**Bankura:** Hotel Saptarshi-+919434108611/9748114667; Hotel Saptaparna- 03242-254375

**Mukutanipuir:** WBFDC Sonajhuri- 033-22370060/61; Panchapally Tourist Complex-09434590399/9932800931; Hotel Amrapali- 03242-252355; Peerless-9932787993

**Jhilimili:** Rimil Tourist Lodge- 03242-240217/240300

**Sutan:** WBFDC Tourist Cottages- 033-2479-9032/7392

**Biharinath:** WBFDC Tourist Lodge- 033-2479-9032/7392; Trekker’s Hut- 9333781242

**Jairambati:** Ramkrishna Mission- 03244-244214

**Bishnupur:** Poura Paryatan Abas- 03242-252200; Bishnupur Tourist Lodge- 03244-252013; Hotel Bishnupur- 03244-252258; Meghmallar Hotel- 03244-252243