

Dhole's Den Bandipur National Park, Karnataka



Indigenous trees, local shrubs and grasses act as natural aquifers and help recharge groundwater. Trees planted near guest rooms provide natural cooling. Rainwater harvesting is carried out on roofs and in the landscape.

Run by Kartik Davey and his wife Ingrid, Dhole's Den is a contemporary safari-homestay that offers a panoramic view of the Nilgiri hills. A shining example of uncompromising eco-standards, the lodge's inclusive approach to tourism is evident in the support it lends to community schools and the Bandipur Forest Department in different capacities.

Guests at the lodge can choose from activities like guided jeep safaris, nature walks, village tours, camp fires, yoga sessions and birdwatching to enjoy a natural experience away from the city. The lodge has been designed to maximize natural light and ventilation combining minimalistic style, natural comfort and eco-friendly design. Large eaves and trees planted near guest rooms provide natural shade and cooling. Local materials have been used where possible. Admirably, the lodge has also installed ramps on its premises for guests with disabilities.



Solar power and a windmill meet all Dhole's Den's energy requirements apart from its water pump.

What sets Dhole's Den apart from the rest is its focus on energy conservation. The lodge is perhaps the first in Bandipur to successfully tap into renewable sources of energy with solar and wind energy powering all its energy requirements apart from the water pump. Dhole's Den has an eco-friendly sewage treatment plant that features root zone technology. Rainwater is harvested on about 90% of the property. An initiative is also underway to increase awareness and deter nearby resorts and lodges from overexploiting groundwater reserves. All cleaning products used are biodegradable and mostly contain natural anti-microbial materials with essential oils. All generated waste is segregated for appropriate re-use or recycling. Guests are encouraged to take their trash back with them and are gifted a memento for the same.



Dhole's Den regularly supports the community school by providing students with educational material.

As much as 90% of staff, including women, are hired locally and provided skills training. The Dhole's Den Research Foundation supports the local school with educational material for students, besides organising regular safaris and conservation awareness programmes. The foundation also supports the local forest department during the forest fire season. They are running an online crowdsourcing campaign to equip forest officials with fire-retardant uniforms and boots. Most importantly, Dhole's Den is in the process of setting up a community development centre.



The natural landscape has been retained and rejuvenated.

More examples of good practice



Wind and solar energy power all Dhole's Den's energy requirements apart from its water pump.



A micro wind and solar power hybrid generator is complemented by decentralised solar energy units.



High ceilings combined with tree planting and wide eaves enable rooms to be kept cool. Rooms have no fans or air conditioning thereby reducing energy use.



The contemporary design maximizes the use of natural light to reduce energy consumption.



Rooms incorporate traditional stonework using local materials.



LED bulbs have been installed throughout the property. A one key system to turn off electricity is used in all the guest rooms. Appliances are star rated.



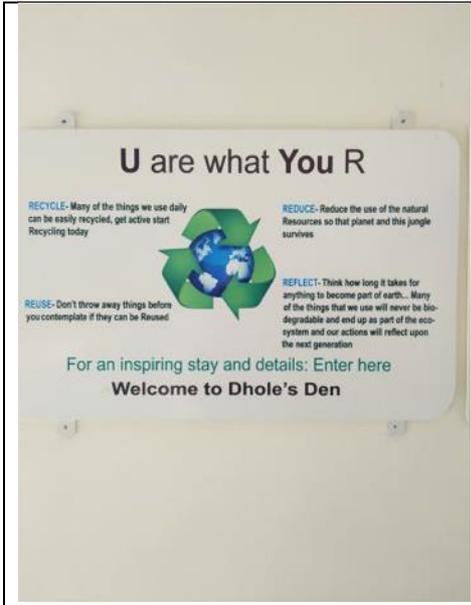
Indigenous trees and shrubs have been planted on the lodge premises and their nomenclature is displayed prominently for the guests' knowledge.



The lodge's organic kitchen garden and farm partially takes care of its kitchen needs. Treated wastewater is used for its irrigation.



Organic waste from the lodge is composted.



Guests are encouraged to recycle and save water and energy. 100% of waste is segregated, and appropriate materials composted or sold for scrap. Guests are encouraged to take waste home.



A bio-gas plant on the lodge premises utilising food and natural waste provides cooking fuel; residual cow dung is used as manure.



A dual flush system and aerated water taps and guest notices are used to conserve water.



A water purifier has been installed to provide drinking water for guests. Bottled water is priced high to discourage its use.



The lodge uses a root zone water treatment system. 25% of water used is recycled. Rainwater harvesting is maximised.



A clean-up drive organised by Dhole's Den on World Environment Day.



Bee keeping classes are some of a range of community initiatives organised by the Lodge.



Local, natural products are sold in the souvenir shop.



The Dhole's Den Research Foundation supports the local school and organises nature awareness programmes for school children.



A well stocked library provides information on local wildlife, flora and fauna.



Guests are briefed about the local surrounding area and park including do's and don'ts.



The lodge motivates guests to stay physically fit and organises yoga classes for the same.



Nature walks, village tours, birdwatching and guided jeep safaris are also offered.



A site map is displayed for health and safety.

More about energy conservation

Dhole's Den-Leading the Way in Bandipur National Park



Combined wind and solar generation at Dhole's Den.

Dhole's Den has led from the front in energy conservation in the Bandipur National Park. A micro wind and solar power hybrid generator from Supernova Technologies, Gujarat, producing about 10KWh of power, is enough to take care of almost all the lodge's energy needs. Power from the grid is used only for pumping water. Separate decentralised solar energy units from the same company have been installed for use in the kitchen, bungalow and other areas.



Decentralised solar energy units at Dhole's Den



Tree planting and wide eaves provide natural shade and cooling

Natural light has been exploited to the maximum extent with large windows and doors. High ceilings, proper insulation in the rooms and wide eaves help maintain ambient temperature. Trees planted around guest accommodation provide natural cooling. All appliances used on the lodge premises are star-rated.

Lights have been fixed only wherever absolutely required to reduce light pollution and disturbance to wildlife. The rooms do not have coffee-makers, air-conditioners, jacuzzies and televisions to minimise electricity consumption. LED lighting is used throughout the property, reducing the energy consumption of a guest bungalow (1,200 sq ft) to 60W when all lights are used and under 25W when only dedicated green energy is used.

Biogas is produced from organic kitchen waste producing fuel for cooking. Local produce is used to the maximum extent to reduce carbon footprint. Guests are informed through verbal briefings and signages to conserve energy and water.



Organic waste is used to produce to bio-gas.

More about community work

Reaching Out to the Community – Dhole's Den

While making a statement in self-sustainability, Dhole's Den in Bandipur National Park has also taken large strides towards inclusive tourism. The Dhole's Den Research Foundation regularly supports the community school by providing them with educational material. The foundation also organises nature walks, safaris and awareness programmes for school children to instil in them a sense of responsibility towards the environment.



Independence Day celebrations at the village school that Dhole's Den supports.



Community classes on bee-keeping.

Most importantly, Dhole's Den is in the process of setting up an Interpretation and Community Development Centre near Mangala village that will house a multi-purpose centre for knowledge sharing; vocational training; interactive learning; dissemination of news about official schemes; and farming and energy conservation tips. Dhole's Den is also running an online crowdsourcing campaign to equip forest officials with fire-retardant uniforms and boots. While most staff are hired from nearby villages, this lodge has also hired women employees.

Handicraft and art made by local artists are sold in the lodge's souvenir shop. The lodge has a working relationship with local communities, and they also arrange village visits for guests who are interested.

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For press and publication enquiries contact: editor@toftindia.org

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