



## Kalavara Betta

**W**eekend travelling is limitless when you are in a city like Bangalore. An hour-and-half drive in any direction to the suburbs can take you to the most beautiful blocks where tranquility can be described the best. Just to be in a big boulder, stare at the sky and think about nothing. What more to ask for? One such hideout is Kalavara Betta in the Sandagiri range.

Driving on the Bangalore-Hyderabad NH, deviation to Dekkalapur and the road there on takes you to a small village called Kalavara that comes under Maddur taluk-gachchal. Little will one believe that Sir A. Vishwamurthy, the architect of the KR dam, Dewan of Mysore, the greatest engineer India had ever known, was born in this vicinity. So much we call an development that it takes away everything from these villages and not even the basic necessities are addressed. Once you decide to give up the hard hitting fact, you reach the base of a large mass of rocks.

The route to the top of the hill depends on what you have on your mind. You could take a difficult four-wheel drive when you get to do some decent rock-climbing. Just the rocks, beat the sun and sweat it all out or take a seven-km trail from 'Papaga' forest that has forest cover, shade and you could get to see the levels of the fort to the top. Either way, the landscape around mesmerizes you.

The smaller hills covered with all shades of green, big old rocks jutting out and bearing the weather at all times and hoping that they will still be untouched by the human greed for years to come. The left side of the climb gives a spectacular view of the famous Nandi hills, you can see the rock face of the hills more peaceful and wild than the drive-up.

While you're climbing up, never let go an opportunity to look around, as that makes you feel excited. The air gets fresher, the grass cover becomes thicker and you will come across the ruins of the fort that surrendered to the British during the Anglo-Mysore war. The piece of history, the story of life gone by that makes you wonder how such a multi-layered fort was constructed way up the hill yet preserving all the natural surroundings.

A good 2.5-hour of climb, leaving your eyes all along will take you to the top of the hill, greeted by a stone carving of the famous Bull and a tiny temple and you know it is time to take a breather. The peace that surrounds you hearing the chirping of the birds, watching those colorful butterflies is more than one could ask for. Away from the noise of the honking vehicles, the endless concrete buildings and the desperate search for fresh air.

If you opt to watch the sunset then choose a hill moon day, camp overnight and you will get to see the sunrise too. But be prepared to carry basic camping gear, food and lots of water. Sitting on one of those huge boulders watching the endless sky, the green carpet below, the fog glowing orange sun setting only to rise the next day defines life in total. A camera along can do the trick of capturing every moment that you do not want to let go.

Any thing that is this breathtaking has to be preserved for long. Be a responsible traveler and ensure that you do not litter and 'leave-no-trace' of your visit as you return home ready only to go back soon.

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