

# Child A shore Thing

Date: 14/03/2012 | Edition: National | Page: 84 | Source: Bureau | Clip size (cm): W: 56 H: 80



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## 2 VISAKHAPATNAM, ANDHRA PRADESH

This important port town also known as Vizag is not on many tourists' maps and is therefore often chanced upon rather than planned for. The drive through low-lying natural hill sides and valleys along the coast is breathtaking and the scenery totally unspoilt. There are lots of quiet spots on the beach; we made noise, sang out loud, played mad games but could not be seen or heard! The main beach is RK Beach, and is frequented by locals. People are quite conservative, and one can feel out of place in swimsuits. Fishermen can be seen bringing in their haul, which can be quite fascinating—or terrifying—as their nets are overlaid with fish. Yarada Beach is a drive away and can only be reached by private transport. Secluded and unspoilt, it's probably the most beautiful beach on the Eastern Coast.



## 3 KOVALAM, KERALA

Aptly called God's own country, Kerala is truly blessed with an unparalleled beautiful coastline that boasts of shimmering blue waters, lush verdant landscape and azure skies. There is a mystical, almost magical beauty all around as one can explore hidden coves tucked away along the coast or opt for the more touristy beaches along the way. Kovalam is the place to head to for a resort vacation. Rest assured that you can enjoy quiet luxury not opulence, in a nice resort that blends in well with its natural surroundings. My children loved the calm Arabian sea with its warm gentle waves that they could easily conquer! At some spots the backwaters meet the sea here and the sand is wonderful and goo-ey, ideal for fabulous wet sand play.

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## 4 BENTOTA BEACH, SRI LANKA

Just 60km away from Colombo, on the south-western coast of the Isle of Serendipity is Bentote Beach. This charming beach town is a haven for water sports. At high tide, the waves are really huge and the children loved surfing—running into the ocean, clambering onto their surf boards, then riding the waves till they were toppled over. We even tried jet skiing but kept toppling over. An hour away, Hikkadua Beach is a great place to swim with giant turtles in the ocean. In fact, the turtles were so close to the beach front that we thought they were 'hotel property', but later learnt that they were actually wild and we sure were lucky to have spotted them. It was an incredible experience for all of us.

## 5 PURI, ODISHA

Most visitors travel to Odisha for its golden triangle, the temple circuit—to visit the towns of Konark, Bhubaneswar and Puri. If you need a break from the heady mix of art and architecture, culture and history, Puri Beach offers all this and more. I remember waking up early to witness a spectacular sunrise, a fiery sun emerging from the water, a rippling sky turning from grey to orange and then blue, glistening waters and shiny sand as the sun slowly rises and heralds a new day. It is a bit dark and windy as one waits, but an adventure that the children will remember for a long time to come. Picnic *deem* (boiled eggs) are sold by hawkers and it's amazing how many one can guzzle at that hour! Every November there is the Puri Beach Festival, and the beach comes alive with music, fashion and cultural shows, food stalls and sand art competitions. It's a great time to take the kids and give them a glimpse into India and its varied hues.

### Aye Sunscreen

Don't forget to pack a tube when you head out for your holiday. "Children must apply a sunscreen (SPF 15-25) while they're out on the beach. One application usually lasts for 2 hours. If they enter the water at any time, they must reapply when they come out."

—Dr Rohit Bhargav, Child Advisor