Go Goa: the carnival is a must-see by Nidhi Varma

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In Europe, the Carnival is a festival which occurs before Lent. Carnivals generally comprise of a parade and a street party. In Goa, the Carnival is known as 'Intruz', which derives from the Portuguese word for Carnival- Entrudo. The main focus of the carnival is in the capital Panaji.

The Goa Carnival was introduced by the Portuguese, who colonized Goa in the 16th century. The carnival is celebrated for three days and nights, whenâ€• King Momoâ€• takes over and the streets come alive with music. Huge parades with bands, dances and floats flow along the streets all night.

The three-day Carnival is all about fun and frolic and itâ€™s a good time for tourists to come to Goa and experience its culture. Goa hotels are geared up with the best deals during the carnivals. The carnival also marks in a way the end of the tourist season in Goa. Within two months of the carnival, by April-end Goa gets the first monsoon showers and its shuts down to brace for the rains.

During the carnival, parades are organized in the morning. Mock battles and masked dances follow the parades. Skits featuring King Momo are performed on the streets.

'Assaltos' is another centuries old tradition that is followed during the carnival. Youngsters raid their neighborâ€™s kitchen and start playing music with old utensils and clay pots. This ritual derives from an 18th century ritual which talks about cleaning the home and getting rid of old and dirty things.

Goa is a popular tourist destination and it is advisable to plan your trip to Goa in advance.

Most hotels in Goa have websites and accept online bookings. Goa also has an international airport which has good domestic and international connectivity. Book a hotel in advance otherwise you will be disappointed and miss out on all the fun and frolic of a carnival.

In addition to the carnival, Goa offers tourists from across the globe, the natural beauty of an unending coastline of Goa, dotted by numerous beaches.

Some of the other attractions that Goa offers are tourist attractions like the Basilica of Bom Jesus and the Cathedral of Saint Francis of Assisi. The cuisine of Goa is a mix of Portuguese and Konkani Influences and some of the best vindaloo and xacuti are available in the heritage hotels in Goa. Goa has a cosmopolitan population and the locals are among the friendliest people in India. Goa also has one of the best party scenes in India with globally renowned DJs and music artists flying down regularly to perform there. Trance music even has a sub-genre named Goa trance which speaks volumes about the development of music and the â€œchilled out nature of the state. Goans regard the carnival as a showpiece event and go to great lengths to ensure that it is a successful event.

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