



Parasailing

Aqua adventures

Always coming up with something new for the tourist, Goa leads the way in water sports too. **By Hema Narayanan**

Does being splashed by water raise your pulse? Is a spot of water sports an integral part of every holiday of yours? If you are the kind whose senses jive by these, then you are a true adventure seeker. And what better place to experience adrenaline-gushing sports, but the beach paradise of Goa?

Perhaps no other place in India can claim to be a true haven for water sports lovers as Goa has become. Perhaps it's the blueness of the Arabian Sea, its location amidst the beautiful Western Ghats range (which is classified as a biodiversity hotspot) or its carefree people. But Goa's quintessential quaintness has bowled people world over and it has visitors thronging to indulge in water sports – all through the year.

Water Sports in Goa is an experience not worth missing. The splendid long coastal stretches in Goa offer so many wonderful opportunities to indulge in all sorts of water sports. You can surf the seas, float across the skies, ski on the waters, and tumble and fall into the waters – the options are many. And not to miss mentioning, wading in the beach waters, at sunset.

It is hard, even for someone who is afraid of indulging in water sports, to resist it. You just cannot stop taking a plunge into the warm inviting Arabian Sea and the range of water sports on offer. Numerous private operators and star hotels offer equipment for these water sports. It is important that a visitor abides by the safety measures for each water sport. Water sports does have an element of risk, but like Doug Coupland, the Canadian author says, "Adventure without risk is Disneyland!"

PARASAILING

Also known as Para Ascending, in this sport a person wears a harness and is launched off a platform, which takes one high into the air – thus setting the pulses racing. In Goa there are two ways in which you can parasail – beach parasailing and winch-boat parasailing.

In beach parasailing, both launch and landing happen from the beach itself. Landing can be tricky, as it is on the beach – so the operator and ground staff need to have a good amount of co-ordination and expertise. In winch-boat parasailing, the launch and landing take place from a winch-boat. One or two people are tied to the harness and you go high in the air, as the boat speeds up.

Whichever way one does parasailing, the thrill that fills one's senses as it takes you up is truly breathtaking. One suddenly feels like a bird, soaring high and getting a bird's eye view of the coastline and the vast sea.

Safety Tip: Ensure to double check on one's harness, cord and other gears before taking off. Ensure there is at least one more observer in the boat apart from the boat operator to keep an eye.

Where: Parasailing can be done from different shores like Bagha, Arossim, Caudalim,

Mobor and Miramar. However parasailing from Candolim, Calangute and Sinquerim gives a spectacular view of the Fort Aguada.

JET SKIING

This involves a jet-powered water scooter, which is accelerated by a very powerful engine. These water scooters, in various vibrant colors can cut through the waves of the sea at a power of 100-135 hp. It is an exhilarating experience even as the water scooter tilts and shifts left to right and round about the waters. The



Jet Skiing

jet-skis are comfortable and easy-to-handle scooters, where you sit in the front with the instructor behind you. It's the instructor who veers the scooter wildly to help you get the thrill. However if you want to go for a solo run, then you must have learnt the basic skills and the instructor needs to be satisfied with it. Jet skiing is one of the most adventurous water sports in Goa and has become a popular water sport among all age groups.

Safety Tip: If you are going solo, ensure the part



Banana Boat Ride

of beach, which you use for jet-skiing, is within the operator's sight in a pre-defined area.

Where: Many beaches in Goa offer this sport including Arossim, Benaulim, Calagunte, Colva, Candolim, Miramar, Mobor, Rajbaga and Utorda.

BANANA BOAT RIDE

The name of this water sport is symbolic to the shape of the boat on which you ride. A banana shaped inflatable boat, which is fully blown, has a seating capacity of four to six, and is tied to a speedboat. Riders sit astride on this tube, which is fastened by two smaller tubes, which provide balance and footrests.

The boat operator twists and turns the boat, as he increases the speed. Now here's the interesting part. The boat tosses away the seated adventurer into the waters as soon as the speedboat picks up speed. It's a constant process of being flung into sea and of carrying yourself back into the banana boat. It is quite a test of stamina, as after a couple of rounds of being flung, your muscles tend to become painful.

Safety Tip: Ensure you wear a life jacket before getting onto the boat. Once you topple, avoid drinking water from the sea.

Where: These rides can be experienced at most beaches like Bagha, Arossim, Caudalim, Mobor and Miramar.

WATER SKIING

Though this adventure sport is relatively new in India, it is seen to be more thrilling than snow skiing. It involves gliding on water. You are tied to the back of the boat with skis fitted to your feet holding on to the tow-rope, which helps in gliding over the water. You need to be good swimmer as you never know when you have to let go off the tow-rope attached to the boat.

Water splashes at an amazing speed all over you, even as the boat glides through the waves of the sea. It is better to get some training from instructors and practice, as you need to be prepared for repeated tumbles and subtle injuries. Strong legs, strong back muscles and skill of handling the tilts are certainly a prerequisite for this sport.

Safety Tip: Maintain a relaxed posture and slightly bent knees for reducing injuries. Ensure there is at least one more observer apart from the boat operator. Important sign language can help in communicating any confusion. Avoid water skiing if waters are rough.

Where: Beaches that offer water ski sport include Arossim, Candolim, Calangute, Mobor, Rajbaga and Utorda.



Water Skiing