Flaming red flowers bursting through the verdant green, sun kissed peaks, fragrance of Champa and the birds chirping. Welcome to the enchanted forests of Simlipal Tiger Reserve that showcases unique biodiversity. Interestingly enough, it is named after the silk cotton bearing tree called 'Simul' in the local language. The same tree that bears the 'flaming red flowers'.

A perfect ecosystem where tigers and leopards hunt, elephants trumpet, endemic orchids bloom; where prey-predator dynamics prosper. Be spellbound by the majestic waterfalls, trek through the jungle, marvel at the crystal clear water of the streams, inhale the clean air and soak in the wild ambience; walk in the nature, watch the mindboggling species of birds or go back in time and visit a tribal village.

Simlipal Tiger Reserve is one of the largest tiger reserve of the country having contiguous tropical forest patch located in Mayurbhanj district of northern Odisha. It benefits from the amalgamation of elements from both Deccan peninsula and foothills of Lower Himalayas. Nature’s north meets nature’s south in a transformative joy. It is adorned with 2750 sq.km of compact sal forest, which harbours the largest breeding population of tigers and elephants of the state. The landscape is home to diverse tribal communities like Santhals, Kolhas, Bhumij, Bathudis etc and few Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) like Mankidia and Khadia.

The contiguous Similipal TR-Kuldiha WLS-Hadgarh WLS Elephant landscape notified as Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve is the safe heaven for elephants in the state. The Government of Odisha declared Similipal as a Wildlife Sanctuary in 2008 with an area of 2306.61 sq.km. It is a proposed National Park notified in two phases, first in 1980 over an area of 303 sq.km and subsequently 542.70 sq.km of area was added to it in 1986 making the total area of the Park 845.70 sq.km. Government of India also declared Similipal as a biosphere reserve in 1994. UNESCO added Similipal Biosphere Reserve to its list of World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) in May 2009.
OPENING AND CLOSING TIME FOR VISITORS:
Simlipal Tiger Reserve remains open to tourists from November to Mid-June, whereas other peripheral areas are open for all seasons.

CLIMATE:
Summers are generally hot with temperatures around 40°C whereas the winter months can be as low as 10°C. The rainfall ranges from moderate to heavy.

MAIN ATTRACTIONS:

**Gudgudia:** On the bank of River Khairi with natural landscape and surrounded by wooded hillocks, Gudgudia gives the feeling of a hill station. An orchidarium with 63 indigenous orchid species, beautiful tropical pine forests, elephant ride, trekking and bird watching trips, are some of the tourist attractions.

**Chahala:** Formerly a royal forest resort from the times of Maharaja, now a Forest Rest House. Surrounded by high sal forest, the sprawling meadow in front facilitates tourists with spectacular view of large herds of herbivores.

**Barehipani Falls:** This picturesque waterfall on the Budhabalanga River flowing northwards inside Similipal. It is one of the highest two-tier waterfalls of the country. There is a watch tower to view the majestic sight and absorb the reverberating sound in the gorge.

**Joranda Falls:** Beautiful perennial waterfall and deep gorge on Panasia nalla, tributary of river Budhabalanga.

**Uski Waterfalls:** Waterfall in between Joranda and Gurguria.

**Nawana:** A green valley with croplands, Nawana thrills the heart. The lifestyle of the tribal residing in the valley is also a point of attraction.

**Brundaban:** Watchtower near the salitick for observing herbivores is the main attraction.

**Jamuan:** FRH in pristine forests, bird watching trips, cycle track to Rajpal. The newly developed eco-tourism complex is now the most sought-after nightstay facility for tourists coming to Similipal.

**Samibrksha:** 3 km south of Podadiha is a sacred hillock, where the Pandavas are believed to have hidden their arms in 5 caves.
ADJOINING ATTRACTIONS:

Ramtirtha: Temple of Lord Rama at the confluence of Khairi and Bhandari rivers. A scenic picnic place with an Astral garden and Mugger Research Centre, Interpretation Centre, Souvenir shops, bird watching trips. Open in all seasons.

Sitakund: A temple, a waterfall and a picnic spot, open in all seasons.

Devkund: An ancient place of worship near waterfall inside STR, a wonderful picnic spot with facilities like pindis, children park open to tourists throughout the year.

Bhimkund: Beautiful, scenic picnic place in all seasons along the river Baitarani 40 kms from Karanja, where Bhim of Mahabharat used to take bath.

ENTRY FEE:
Permit has to be obtained from Jashipur and Pithabata tourist counters to enter the. For night stay facilities, all the accommodations can be booked online through www.ecotourodisha.com

ACCOMMODATION:
Eco-tourism complex at Ramtirth, Jamuani, Kumari and Gurguria.
Caution: The tourists should be prepared for an extreme winter in Simiplipal forest. Protective gears can reduce the chances of any vector borne diseases.
UNIQUE FEATURES:

- Home to largest potential breeding population of Tigers in the state
- Only Tiger Reserve to have melanistic tigers
- Similipal, the largest compact Sal bearing forest in the country
- Home to tribal communities like Ho, Santhal, Mankadia, Gond, Kolha, Bathudi, Bhuyan, Khadia, Bhumij
- Largest watershed of the state with major rivers like Budhabalanga, Baitarani, Salandi, many perennial rivulets and waterfalls namely Barehipani (400 mts) and Joranda (150 mts)
- Home to many endemic orchids

HOW TO REACH:

There are two entry gates to Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR). One is Kallani, approachable from Jashipur town about 15 km away, the other one is at Pithabata, approachable from Baripada town about 20 km away.

By Air - The nearest airports for Simlipal are Bhubaneswar approx. 270 km, Ranchi 300 km and Kolkata approx. 240 km.

By Rail - The nearest railhead is Balasore (approx. 60 km from Baripada) and Tatanagar approx. 100 km away.

By Road - Baripada is the most accessible point to reach the tiger reserve, which is at the distance of 270 kms from Bhubaneswar and 240 km from Kolkata. Jashipur is also well connected with Kolkata (290 km) and Jamshedpur (100 km).

The Tiger Reserve is easily accessible by readily available buses, taxis and jeeps.
FLORA:
The diverse landscape supports 1076 plant species with 94 species of orchids of which three species are endemic - *Eria meghasaniensis*, *Tyna hookeriana* and *Bulbophyllum panigrahianum*. Sal, Bija, Sissoo, Asan, Ashoka, Champa are the main tree species. It houses 7% of the flowering plants and 8% orchid species of India.

FAUNA:
The rich diversity of habitats and mosaic of landscapes with wide altitudinal and climatic variation of Similipal supports a fascinating faunal composition. There are 55 species of mammals, 362 species of birds, 62 species of reptiles, 21 species of amphibians and many species of insects and micro fauna.

**Herbivores:** Similipal core harbors the largest population of elephants in Odisha. Gaurus are found in few localized pockets in herds ranging from 8 to 30. The other herbivore species found in Similipal are Sambar, Chital, Barking deer, Mouse deer and Chausingha.

**Carnivores:** The tiger reserve supports a very good prey base for major carnivores like Tiger and Leopard. Other carnivores commonly found in Similipal are Leopard Cat, Fishing Cat, Jungle Cat, Wolf, Jackal, and Hyena.

Other significant mammalian species of Similipal are Ratel, Indian Giant Squirrel (*Ratufa indica*), Flying Squirrel, Mongoose, Pangolin, Hare, Langur, Rhesus Macaque etc.

**Reptiles and Amphibians:** A significant population of Mugger Crocodile is present in river systems and perennial streams of Similipal. The snakes found in Similipal include Python, King Cobra, Common Cobra, Krait, Viper and many more. A total 21 species of frogs, 62 species of reptiles, 6 species of turtles, 20 lizard species and 33 species of snakes have been recorded in this landscape.

**Birds:** With 362 species, Similipal is a Bird enthusiast’s paradise. Common birds are Peafowl, Jungle Fowl, Partridge, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Grey Hornbill, Hill Myna, Parakeets, Crested Serpent Eagle, and Oriole etc.