



# BREAK FAST

## GETAWAYS BETWEEN FRIDAY AND MONDAY



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## Madikeri, Coorg

**L**USH COFFEE plantations, green hillocks, cool, crisp air and a grand procession of temple chariots on Dussehra—this festive season, give the obvious a skip and head to Madikeri instead of Mysore. Just a five-hour drive from Bangalore, this sleepy plantation town is a hidden paradise. An intoxicating aroma of coffee engulfs you as you drive up the hilly terrain, leaving the mad rush of the city behind.

The rich green landscape enchants as you pass by streams and forests. Once you reach this old-world town, park your car at the hotel and leave it there. Madikeri is best explored on foot. Take long walks through plantations, spicy smells tickling your senses—a heady mix of

coffee, cardamom, pepper. And if you get lucky you might just spot a herd of elephants drinking water from the estate stream!

Try a homestay to experience the rich Kodava culture and cuisine. You must eat the spicy *pandi curry* (a peppery pork dish) and *keema dosas* and wash them down with piping hot coffee, so addictive that one cup is never enough.

Visiting the Madikeri Fort might not be such a bad idea, especially if history and heritage enthral you. The Madikeri Palace is located inside the fort. If you want to spend a quiet evening watching a spectacular view of the sunset, go to Raja's Seat from where the king of Kodagu used to see the sun go down each day. Head to

Abbey Falls, located seven km from the town, to see River Kaveri cascade down a rockface.

Dussehra, better known as Dasara in this hill station, is a very special affair. Preparations begin months in advance. On the final day, a procession of beautifully decorated temple chariots winds its way through the city. To add to the excitement, a prize is awarded for the best decorated chariot. ●

**GOOD TO KNOW**

*Don't lose heart if you can't make it for Dussehra. Madikeri has good weather till April. Carry woollens for the chilly nights and walking shoes for treks.*

—Pallavi Pasricha