

Gokarna: Rest and relaxation on the Karnataka coast (2/2/2008 to 2/12/2008)

Its far from the prettiest beach I've seen, there isn't a whole lot to do, yet Gokarna has a way of gripping and enticing travelers to stay far beyond their intended duration. I think one would be hard pressed to find anyone who has not stayed longer than they expected among the simple huts and guesthouses that line the 3 cove-like beaches stretching south from the pilgrim town of Gokarna. The place is a welcome respite from the rigors of life on the Indian road. It's a place where you can relax in the morning, go for a swim in the afternoon, and grab a beer with your wood fired pizza or grilled seafood in the evening as you watch the sun sink into the Arabian Sea, all for less than \$10 a day. Its no wonder Gokarna has become synonymous with relaxation for long term travelers and neo-hippies alike, taking the title from the now commercialized beaches of Goa further north. The crowd is a mix of neo-Hippies, original Hippies some who look like they may have been here since the sixties, long term travelers, and a handful of mostly European beach holiday'ers. Add in the Hindu pilgrims who come to visit town of Gokarna's many revered temples, and you have an eclectic but interesting mix of people, all of whom combine to make up Gokarna's relatively chill vibe.

I met a couple of interesting characters in the relaxed atmosphere, my neighbor, a self described capitalist and half Hippie, from San Francisco was a software engineer graduate of M.I.T. and has since turned into a full time investor to finance his life on the road for the last 2 and a half years. In between paragliding in the Himalayas and cruising around India on his motorcycle, he contemplates the mess that is the financial world speculating on the effects of everything from rising food and energy prices to the insolvency of the financial derivatives market. Thoughts which have led to a more than a few interesting conversations, as we sit on the porch of the guesthouse passing the hours our respective laptops. Another interesting guy I ran into again at Gorkarna, after first meeting him in Bijapur, was a bald headed chatty New Yorker who is a free lance writer now living in Delhi. He is currently writing the Karnataka chapter for Rough Guide and was previously based in Kashmir where he wrote a few pieces for the Economist. After being on the reality TV show the Amazing Race, and failing to make it as an actor he went back to school for journalism and taking a job with an English paper in Kashmir after a stint in New York.

Both of their stories made me rethink a bit the possibilities of making some money on the road as well, especially as I pass the one year mark. Of course, I don't have the capital required to be a sustainable capitalist nor do I think my misspelled filled ramblings will make it into the economist anytime soon, but there are possibilities out there and sometimes it's just a matter of pursuing them. Of course pursuing often requires the dreaded "work" word among the long term traveling community.



View of the beach in front of Gokarna town.



The room \$2.50 buys you on Kudle beach, Gokarna.



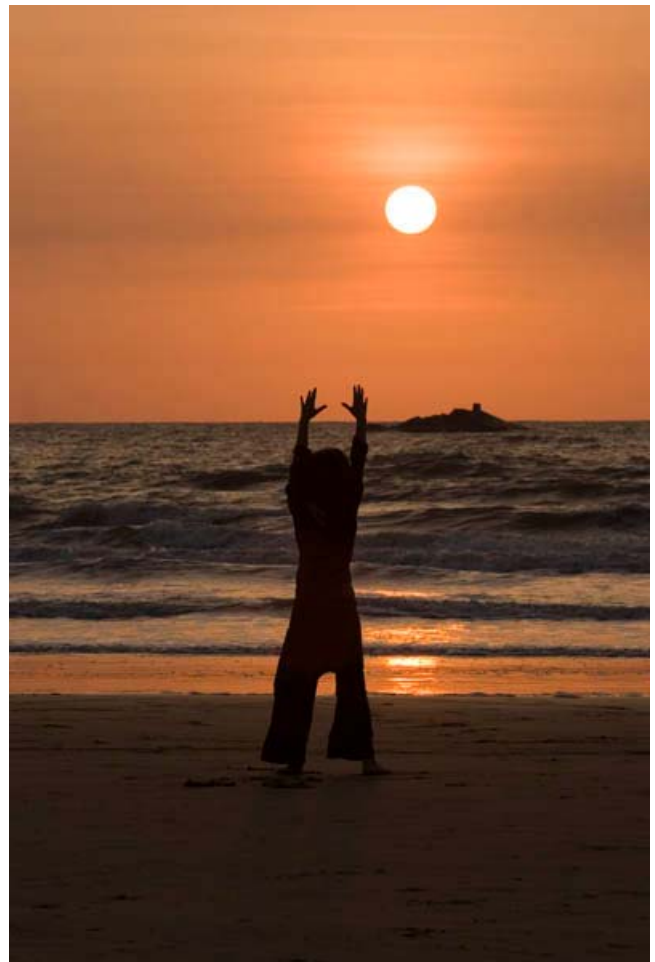
The view \$2.50 buys you on Kudle beach, Gokarna.



**Sunset Kudle beach,
Gokarna.**



**Playing cricket at sunset on Kudle beach,
Gokarna.**



**Girl doing some sort of yoga/ tai chi at
sunset on Kudle beach, Gokarna.**



Kudle beach, Gokarna.



Tourist doing yoga on Kudle beach, Gokarna.



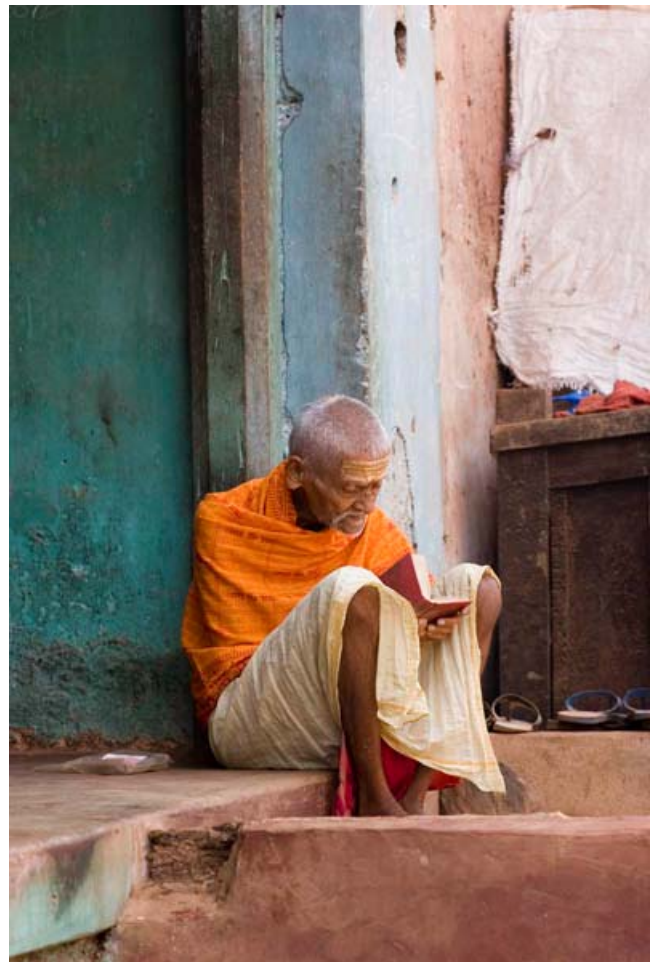
Boat being pushed into the water, Gokarna.



Beach, Gokarna.



Beach, Gokarna.



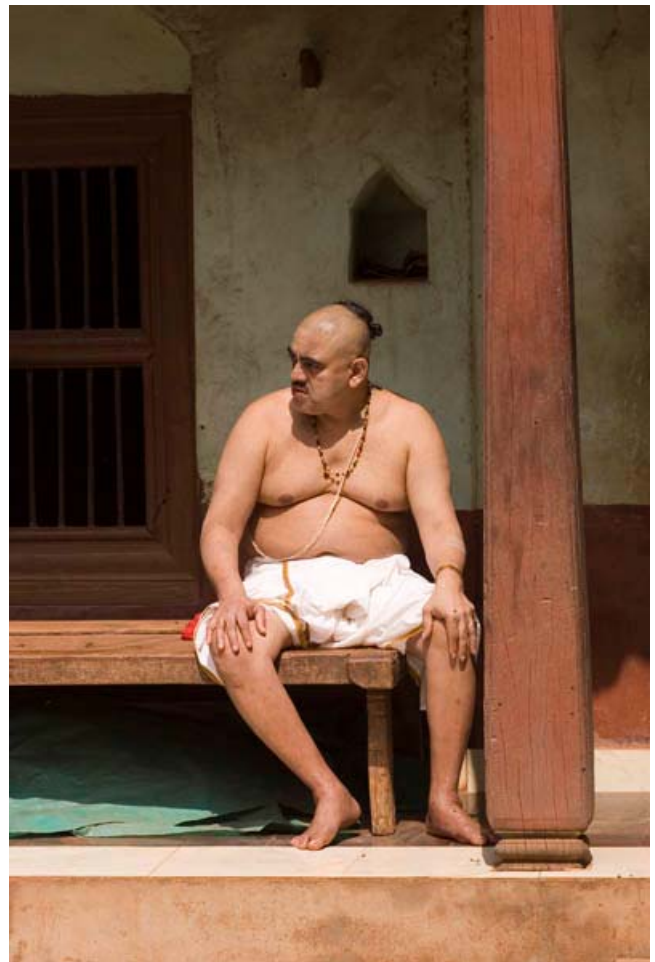
Shiva devotee reading, Gokarna.



**Cow on Kudle beach,
Gokarna.**



**Pilgrim sporting some bright yellow
sunglasses, Gokarna.**



Pilgrim, Gokarna.



Birds in palm tree, near Gokarna.



Beach at river mouth, near Gokarna.



**Fishing boats, beach,
Gokarna.**



**Fishing in a lagoon, near
Gokarna.**



Fishing boats, near Gokarna.



Mending fishing nets, near Gokarna.



Bird looking a lot like a small bald eagle (avian aficionados help me out) killed and displayed presumably to scare birds away from the fish (not sure it works), fishing town near Gokarna.