

Travel Around the World with India's Trees

by Yoav Daniel Bar-Ness

www.treeoctopus.net/india.htm

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If you are a student and are looking to learn more about this big and exciting planet, you are in great luck. You are surrounded by countless teachers from wild jungles, mysterious deserts, and foreign countries! These teachers are your natural heritage: India's trees! These trees represent the natural world and can teach you many things about life in your home, life in your country, and life on your planet. Meeting trees, as a scientist, tourist, or student, is fun, easy, and interesting.

India's jungles are famous throughout the world as being very biodiverse jungles, with many types of plants, animals, and other living things found nowhere else in the world. Trees make good introductions to this amazing biodiversity, and through them you can gain an appreciation for the rare and special treasure that is India's wild life. Trees are easy to learn, easy to find, and easy to share with your friends. Do you have a favorite tree near your school or home?

First, let's start with your home: Are there any fruit trees in your area? Can you and your friends find a Mango tree? A Neem tree? or a Jamun tree? If you can recognize these fruits, then you are beginning your science studies in botany. Have you ever climbed a tree? If so, you are enjoying these trees in exactly the same way as many many students in your town.

Second, your country: India is a big country and in almost every city you can find some familiar trees like Banyan, Peepal, Neem, or Jamun. If you are traveling in the farthest corners of the country, maybe you will find a familiar tree that you know from home. If you can find them, you are learning about the diversity and natural treasures of the country. Some of India's trees are amongst the biggest in the world- there is a giant banyan at Kolkata's Botanical Garden that is a kilometer around!

Third, your planet: Many trees have been brought from other parts of the world and are now familiar sights of India. Do you know Eucalyptus, Baobab, or Tamarind (Imli)? You might be surprised to know that these have been brought over from distant countries. Eucalyptus is a tree that originated in Australia, and Baobabs and Tamarinds are trees that originally came from eastern Africa. So when you meet these trees, you are meeting visitors from another nation. They will be glad to share their shade and fruit with you. Make sure to give them a smile when you pass near them.

Picture captions:

The giant Banyan tree at the Kolkata Botanical Garden, West Bengal, is one of the largest trees in the world, like a small forest spreading out from one original tree.

This huge Baobab in Orchha, Madhya Pradesh, named Mallanimli, is almost five hundred years old! It was brought over from Africa by the Portuguese as a gift for the Raj Bir Singh.