

## ASHISH BHATIA, FOUNDER AND CEO, ITMENAAN LODGES

INAPPROPRIATE / INACCURATE?



- Location: [Uttarakhand, India](#)
- Country: [India](#)
- Speaks: [english](#), [hindi](#)
- Services: [accommodation](#), [food](#), [other](#)
- Cost: Between \$180 and \$230 (\$US per day / per item)
- Recommended by: [Shweta \(Shwe\)](#), March 20, 2012
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### Description:

(Profile information added by Leap Local): Language: English, Hindi

Location: Indian Himalayas in Uttarakhand, Plains of Punjab

Country: India

Profile: Ashish Bhatia, Founder and CEO, Itmenaan Lodges

A high profile and paying career in Consulting, a dream job for many... an opportunity to live and work in London, a dream for many... investing all hard earned savings into a passionate venture, a dream for some...

Armed with a degree in Management from one of the Top B-Schools in India and five years of experience working at a top strategy consulting firm in London, Ashish Bhatia left his cushy job to launch Itmenaan Lodges in 2011 with an aim to offer sophisticated lodging facilities to leisure travellers in India.

Itmenaan can variously be defined to mean 'relaxation', 'at ease', 'at peace'. Indeed, this is what Ashish intends to offer to travellers staying at his lodges. The philosophy of the company is:

1. Small, intimate and rooted in local culture: Offer low impact and high quality tourism with each lodge having its own unique personality depending on the location.
2. Stylishly simple and sophisticated: Assure all creature comforts while keeping the lodges devoid of unnecessary gadgetry.
3. Interpretive knowledge of the surrounding: Encourage the travellers to understand the local culture, architecture, flora, fauna etc. with the help of staff.
4. Great food and discreet service: Provide excellent food and great drinks while customising according to individual preferences.

Ashish's first lodge, Itmenaan Estate, Kumaon Himalayas, India is a quaint haven, nestled in rural Indian Himalayas with stunning views of snow capped peaks. The 10-acre estate includes virgin pine, oak and rhododendron trees, terraced fields laden with seasonal fruits and vegetables, and to top it all, a small private perennial natural spring. The accommodation on the estate is a charming 100-year-old traditional "Kumaoni" village house renovated using age old local construction techniques and local materials. The lodge is a fine balance of authenticity and comfort.

At the estate, "Village Walks" can be organised for travellers. These walks offer the travellers a unique opportunity to experience and explore this unspoilt Himalayan region on foot. The walks allow travellers to see rural Kumaon from close quarters where they can help village women in farming, share a cup of 'chai' with the local elders, pay obeisance at a Hindu temple or just soak in the stunning scenery. The stay can be at Itmenaan Estate or a few nights can also be spent at renovated village houses in the region.

The second lodge Punjabiyat, near Amritsar, India was launched earlier this year. Set amidst acres of lush fields and long canals, Punjabiyat is located in the heart of the food bowl of India – Punjab. Punjabiyat is meant to be an expression of the zest and effervescence of the Punjabi culture and its large heartedness. Stylishly simple four standalone cottages and a spacious lounge nestle in the gleaming expanse of farmland offering peaceful yet stimulating environment. Visit to local Gurudwara ("Sikh temple), participation in local festivities, walks and cycle rides along the fields and canals can keep travellers busy when they are not savouring the tandoori (Indian open oven) food. Truly, this is a magical Punjab getaway with a twist of unpretentious luxury.

The company also takes social and environment responsibility very seriously. Some of the initiatives undertaken by the company include:

#### Social Responsibility

- 10% of profits of each lodge go to the local community for education and health projects.
- Each lodge has majority of the staff from the local village / district. Many of the current staff at both the lodges were construction workers at the site earlier and have now been employed full time after training in hospitality.
- Local community is economically linked to the lodges – local produce is bought, local services e.g. tailoring of uniforms are used as much as possible.

#### Environmental Responsibility

- Tree plantation drives are regularly undertaken – more than 300 have been planted at Itmenaan Estate and more than 100 at Punjabiyat.
- Organic vegetables are grown at the estate which then supplements the vegetable requirement at the estate.
- At Itmenaan Estate, a brown field site was used for construction (renovation of an old house) which is hugely beneficial to the environment
- Wherever possible, stone, wood and slate was recycled during construction.
- Most of the procurement for construction and now for running the lodges is done locally to reduce the transportation.

**Recommended For:** Itmenaan Lodges are highly recommended for travellers who want to get away from big cities and relax amidst nature. The lodges are ideal for people who want a touch and feel of India that is unspoilt by touristy itineraries.

**Not for:** It is certainly not recommended for tourists who like to go to a busy touristy destination and like to engage themselves in materialistic entertainment (like pubs, discos, gadgetry etc.)

(Initial Itmenaan recommendation made by Shweta) Itmenaan Estate is a fairytale getaway in a peaceful rural setting in the Kumaon Himalayas. The 10-acre estate includes virgin pine, oak and rhododendron trees; terraced fields laden with seasonal fruits and vegetables; and to top it all, a small private perennial natural spring. The estate offers panoramic views of the Himalayas including the majestic Nanda Devi.

The 100-year-old traditional Kumaoni style stone house on the estate has been painstakingly restored and offers 3 tastefully designed en suite bedrooms. In and around the house are abundant places for you to unwind and relax - the courtyard overlooking the mountains and verdant valleys, the semi open-air dining area, numerous nooks and corners perfect for reading or for fulfilling your spiritual quest.

The cuisine is local, North Indian and continental prepared using fresh produce from the estate gardens or sourced locally.

Enjoy mesmerising views of mountains and valleys. Fill your senses with the scent of the earth. Stare at countless stars that enlighten the night sky. Read, write or paint in the tranquil and scenic surroundings. Partake in invigorating farming, gardening and bee keeping activities. Take leisurely walks or challenge yourself on the trekking trails and enjoy sumptuous picnic hampers that accompany your explorations.

The estate is well connected to Almora, Mukteshwar, Jageshwar, Binsar, Bhimtal, Nainital and Corbett National Park. The estate is a 10-minute walk from the road head.

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Uploaded by  
Shweta on  
March 20, 2012.

Ashish Bhatia  
and his team  
Uploaded by  
Kirsten Koza on  
May 23, 2012.

Punjabiyat  
Uploaded by  
Kirsten Koza on  
May 23, 2012.