



Natural ingredients are the mainstay of therapies at the Sanjeeva Spa

## Vedic Village, Earthy healing

### WHY GO

Sometimes, living in India's cultural capital can be a drag. Especially since culture lives in a concrete jungle, and walks, traffic-clogged roads, and breathes air that stifles. Take heart: culture and its attendant evils have restricted entry into Vedic Village Spa Resort. The feel-good factor reigns at this property, just an hour's drive from Kolkata. So does Nature.

Once you've gotten over the startlingly welcome contrast

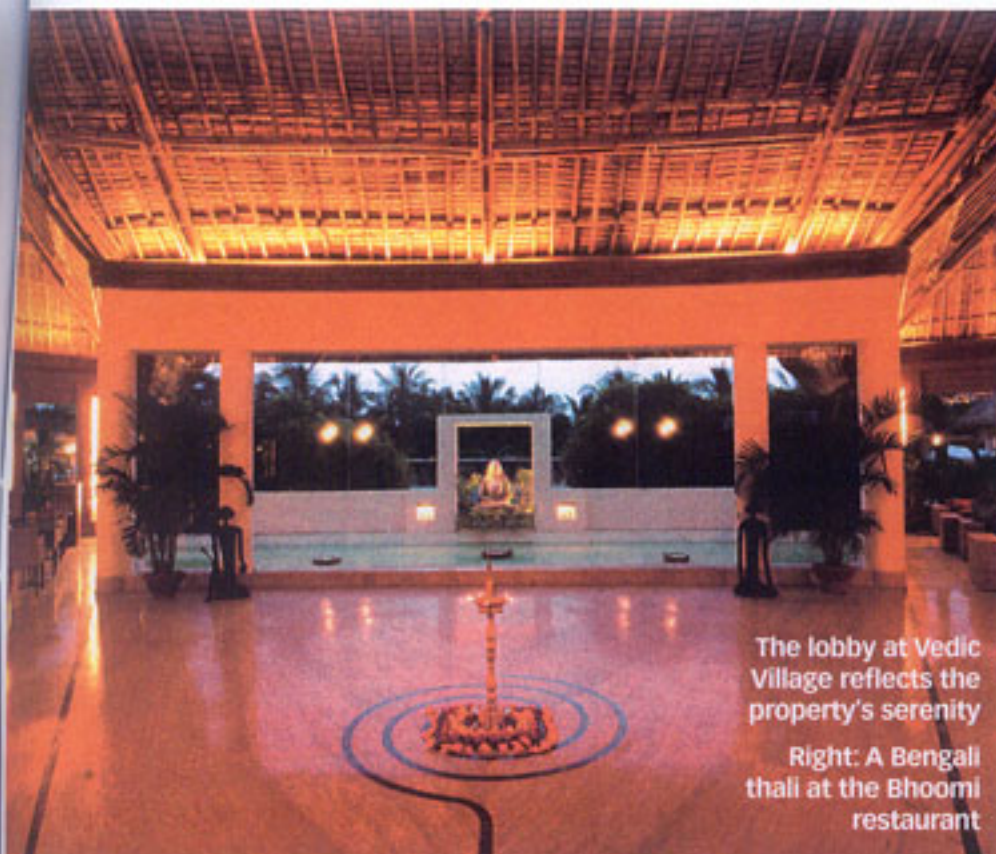
between the resort's calm and the chaos of the city left behind, *rouse yourself to explore* as much as you can of the 125-acre property on foot. You'll find brick pathways snaking mysteriously onwards, bunches of leaves and branches brushing your shoulders, battalions of trees enveloping you warmly. Man-made lakes will seem supremely natural in all their muddy glory.

If you can tear yourself away from the green outdoors, allow

Ayurvedic fragrances to draw yourself into the on-site **Sanjeeva Spa**, offering both the Kerala Ayurveda experience and Western wellness therapies (00-91-33-3887650, 00-91-9830820448; [sanjeeva@thevedicvillage.com](mailto:sanjeeva@thevedicvillage.com); 6.30am-7.30pm; open to non-residents on prior booking). Begin with the Dead Sea mineral mud wrap (Rs 2,400/ 80 minutes). After a heavenly full-body massage, you'll be treated to a granular salt scrub (exfoliating but a wee bit 'ouch') and then a gooey-but-fun chocolate-y clay smear. You

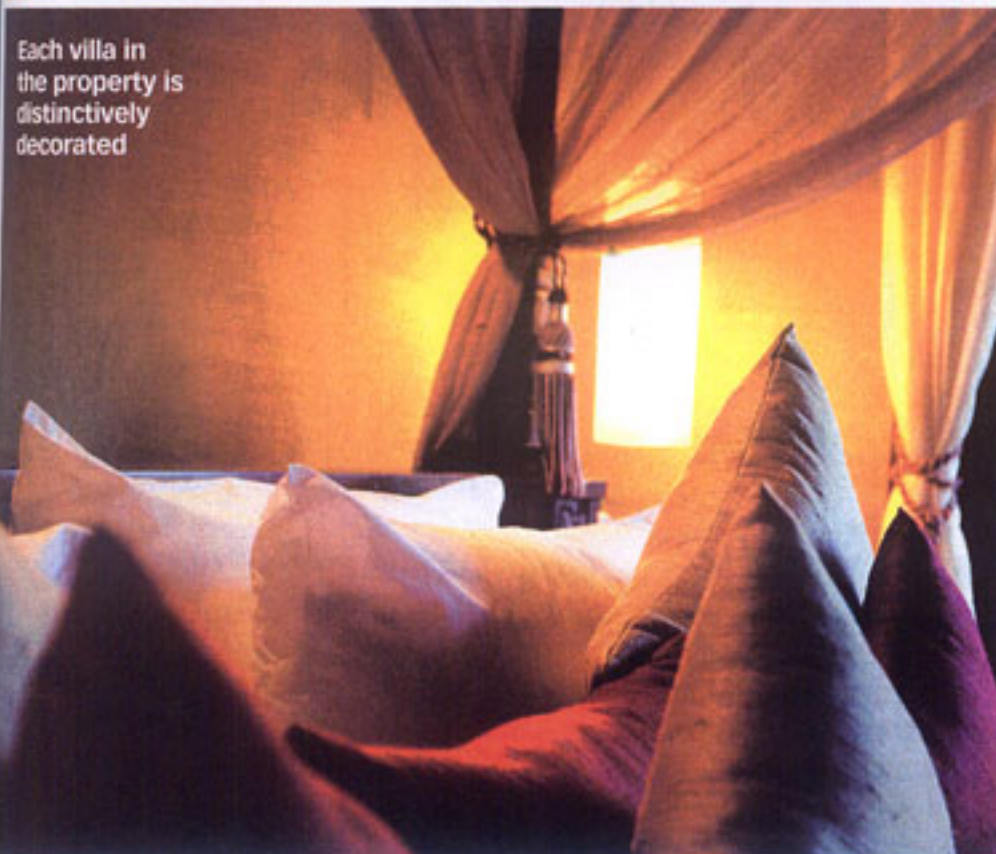
end with a banana leaf wrap (yes, they literally encase you in an amusingly giant one), and a cup of herbal tea. You may lose track of the therapies on offer – some with freshly-ground coffee, grated orange rind, honey, mashed flowers, fruits and even squishy tomato – but concentrate, do. Later, a 'holistic doctor' may suggest a live blood analysis (Rs 500), where you see your animated blood cells projected on a computer screen (freaky!), to make you aware of any lurking health problems. If you're more

**GREAT FROM  
Kolkata**

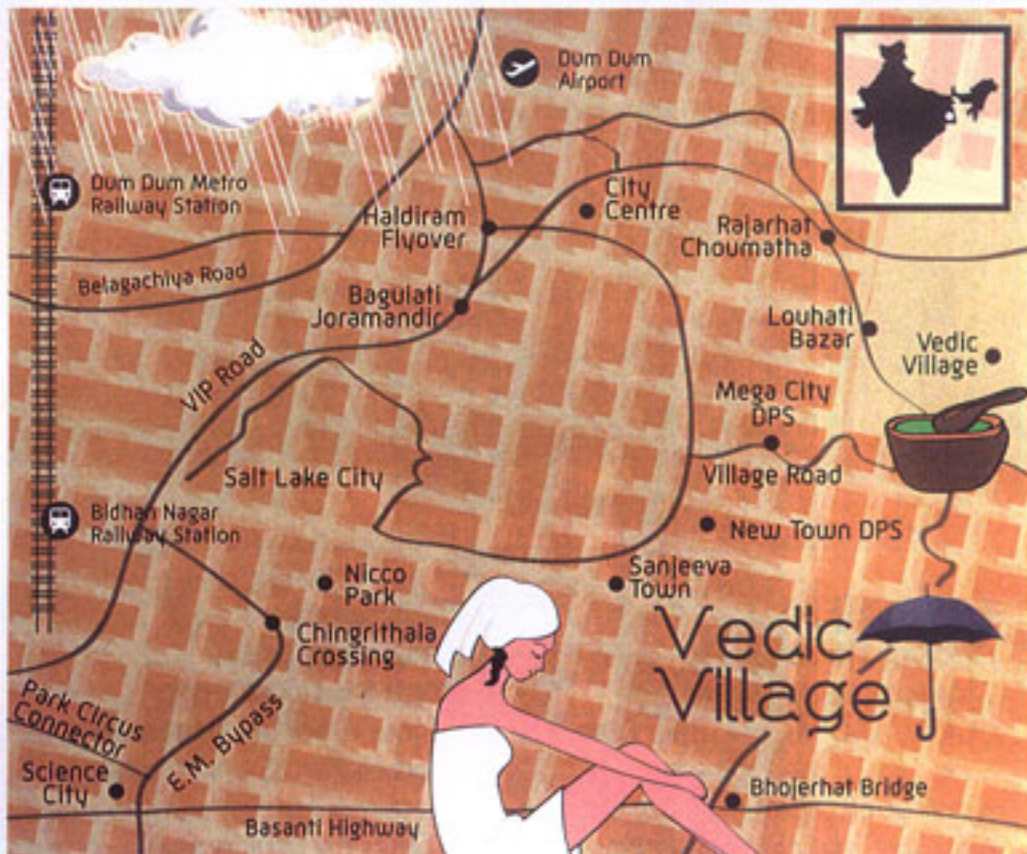


The lobby at Vedic Village reflects the property's serenity

Right: A Bengali thali at the Bhoomi restaurant



Each villa in the property is distinctively decorated



## GO NOW

The monsoon is a perfect time to enjoy a cup of Darjeeling tea with buttered scones in the safety of your room's personal patio.

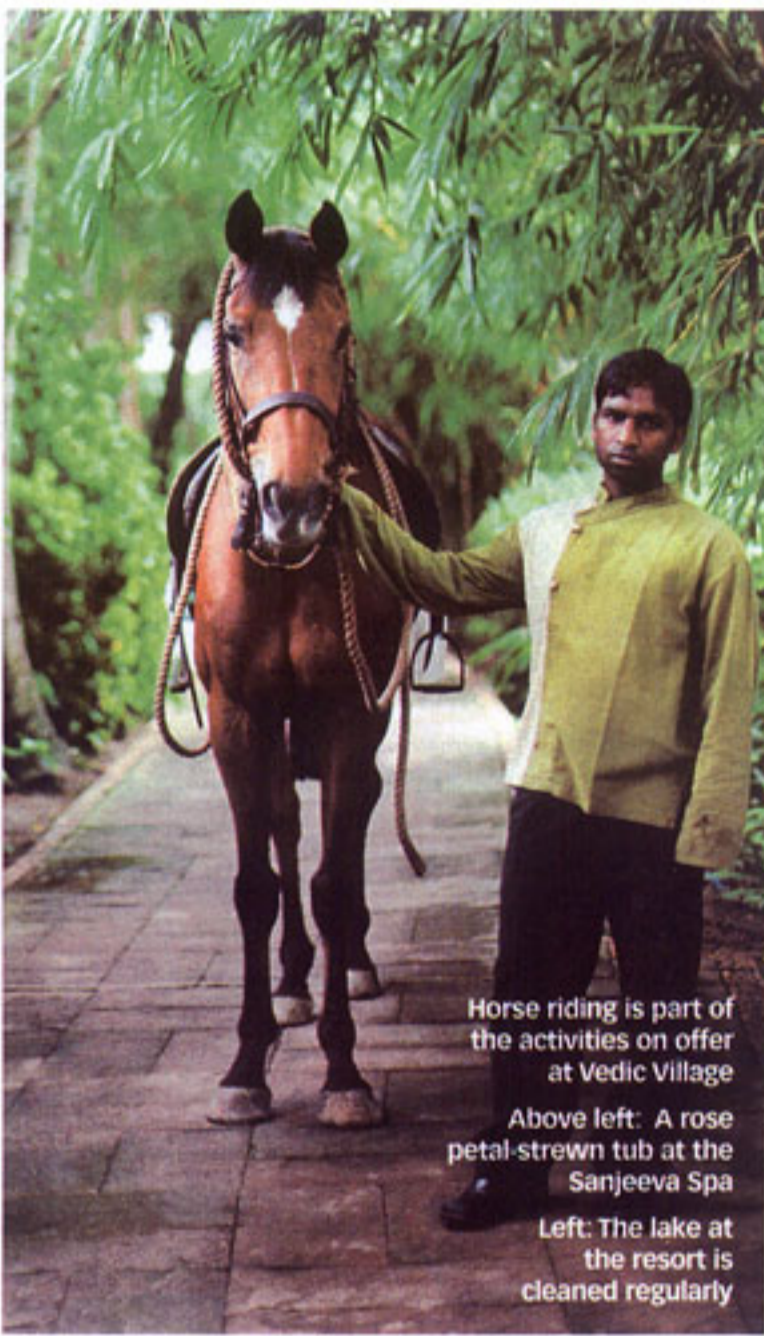
Inclined toward the Ayurvedic path, the most popular therapy on offer is the 'Dinacharya' (literally 'daily routine'; Rs 6,000 for a day's Vedic lifestyle session), although this involves getting up at an ungodly hour to start the day with yoga.

Other ways to set your blood coursing include options from Vedic Village's rather full sports goodie bag: cricket, badminton, throwball and croquet are on offer. Testing your archery and dart throwing skills can be a comical experience (free), while cycling (Rs 100 deposit), horse trotting (Rs 100/ 30 minutes), kite flying (free), tri-cycle rickshaw pulling (free; 30 minutes; ough!) and golf-cart riding (Rs 100/ 30 minutes; delightful) can be stimulating too (contact the reception desk; 7am-dusk).

But if your chosen therapy is just pure relaxation, the quaint library (near the gym; 7am-10pm) houses over 450 books and 20 periodicals, as well as the lone computer with internet (Rs 35/ hour). You can also take a book to your room (Rs 100 deposit). Or soak in the blueness of the swimming pool (8am-8pm), fringed by magnolia trees and reclining wooden chairs. A quaint gazebo near the pool, with crafted timber benches, is a perfect place to take in the beauty.

Rather achieve Nirvana via your tummy? Vedic Village offers a seven-meals-a-day menu, with breakfast, second breakfast, elevenses, luncheon, afternoon tea, dinner and supper to sate your hunger. And as evening begins to draw in, take a boat ride (7am-5pm; free; 30 minutes) around the property. Let the approaching darkness, full of the sounds of nature, reinforce once more the serenity of the reign of nature.

WORDS P S BHAVANA  
PHOTOGRAPHS JYOTHY KARAT



Horse riding is part of the activities on offer at Vedic Village

Above left: A rose petal-strewn tub at the Sanjeeva Spa

Left: The lake at the resort is cleaned regularly

## WHERE TO STAY

**Vedic Village Spa Resort** has a wide variety of rooms, all with breakfast, use of indoor games room, swimming pool, gym and library. These include studios (Rs 5,000 onwards), suites, deluxe bungalow and Aqua Home rooms with separate living, dining and bedroom areas (Rs 6,000-Rs 10,000; the Aqua Home rooms come with rooftop terrace garden and a private pool), and villas. The villas – thatched mud and bamboo structures – are the resort's best. The Earth Villas (Rs 10,000) and Deluxe Villas (Rs 12,000) have woodwork crafted out of railway sleepers. The single Zamindar Villa seems fairly overpriced (Rs 20,000 onwards) in spite of a swanky massage chair (00-91-33-66229900, 00-91-9874365365; [thevedicvillage.com](http://thevedicvillage.com); [vedicoperations@thevedicvillage.com](mailto:vedicoperations@thevedicvillage.com); Shikharpur, Bagu, Rajarhat).



## FACT SHEET

### Getting There

**Closest metro:** Kolkata (30km), a 90-minute drive away. Stretches of the route are winding, crowded, narrow, pot-holed and tiring. Sigh. So avoid driving yourself (especially if you aren't great at the wheel). Instead, hop into a hired vehicle and leave early to avoid traffic bottlenecks (Rs 100/ hour; Rs 100 driver charge after 12am; 8 hours minimum). The resort also arranges for a pick-and-drop (Rs 650 onwards). But, inform the travel desk (00-91-33-39877650) in advance.

**Closest airport:** Netaji Subhas Chandra International Airport, Dum Dum, in Kolkata (15km; 30-minute drive). Kolkata is well-connected by air to all the major cities in India. Economy return flights could be below Rs 8,000. A pre-paid taxi from the airport would cost you

Rs 300 onwards.

**Closest railheads:** Sealdah Station (20km; 35-minute drive) and Howrah Station (30km; 50-min drive). Kolkata's railway connectivity from other parts of India is fantastic. There are direct trains from all the cities, and almost all north-east bound trains go through Howrah. Taxis to Vedic Village from Sealdah cost Rs 400 onwards; and Rs 500 onwards from Howrah.

**Getting Around**  
The property is best explored on foot. There is nothing much to see in the vicinity (Rajarhat), but zooming into Kolkata is an option. Local buses (No 91, 91A, 91B, 91C, DN 16, MS 91B, etc) ply, but they seem pretty inconvenient. An easier option is to hire a car (Rs 150/ hour onwards and Rs 15/ km onwards) from the resort's travel desk.

## WHAT TO EAT

Vedic Village is quite a gastronome's delight. Stuff your face with the goodness of a quintessential Bengali thali (Rs 350 veg, Rs 450 non-veg) at the **Bhoomi** specialty restaurant (12.30pm-3.30pm; 7.30pm-10.30pm). **Yagna**, the multi-cuisine place (6.30am-10.30am, 12.30pm-3.30pm, 7.30pm-10.30pm) has both a buffet (Rs 450 veg; Rs 550 non-veg) and à la carte (Rs 300-Rs 325 fish and meat dishes; Rs 180-Rs 200 veg dishes). You must try the beautifully-presented dim sums (Rs 225 veg; Rs 275 chicken) and Chinese crispy stir-fried chicken in honey sauce (Rs 300) with succulent noodles (Rs 250 onwards). **Sheetal** is a round-the-clock coffee shop, where you can sip beverages and dig into delectable oven-fresh goodies (Rs 80 onwards). The lounge bar **Agnee** is very atmospheric (11am-10.30pm; cocktails Rs 150 onwards).



## WHAT TO PACK

A mix of evening, casual and sporty clothes – including riding and swimming gear, as well as comfy walking shoes (quaint, brick pathways call for long walks). Don't forget to tuck in mosquito repellent cream and sunglasses (you'll need them if you're outdoors).



## SHOPPING

You can buy trinkets like bronze, copper and clay jewellery (Rs 30 onwards), and terracotta bric-a-brac (Rs 50 onwards) from Vedic Village's shop (near the gym; 10am-6pm).



## SAFETY

The resort is an enclosed area with its own security system. It is a safe place; even for travellers going solo (moreover, West Bengal's culture respects women to the hilt). However, in case of an emergency, you can go to the Rajarhat police station (00-91-33-25733289; 4 km).