

Green Tadoba

I have been going to Tadoba for nearly 15 years now, and at one time it felt like a second home. Even in late June, as the park prepared to close for the monsoon, it would be bejewelled in green from the pre-monsoon rains. I used to love photographing tigers in the rain.

My journey with Tadoba started like an addiction. For four years, I visited every month for a week at a time. Back then, there were so many female tigers with cubs that we would come out of each safari having seen 17 to 18 tigers. I witnessed every habit, every behaviour, up close. It taught me tiger behaviour, it also taught me about nature, and about my own way of handling situations in life. I remember bringing my daughter there when she was quite young; she couldn't believe how many sightings she had.

The green surroundings make the tiger look like a sparkling, radiant angel with the contrast of green and orange is stunning. The grass grows high, helping the cat camouflage from its prey. It's a nervous time for the prey, and that suspense only adds to the thrill of the sighting.

During monsoon, only the buffer zones stays open and the core is closed. This has real benefits. For one, local people still get work; three months without income is a long stretch otherwise. Tourist access also helps patrol the buffer forest against illegal activity, since guides and drivers keep the forest department informed on the forest's health. Resorts can keep their staff employed, which means better service for guests and helps the resorts sustain themselves through the season. Most weekends, people from nearby towns come for a single safari — just to spend a day appreciating the wildlife. Tadoba is deeply loved by the people of Maharashtra.

With buffer zones open all around the core, the whole ecosystem, forest and wildlife alike, stays protected even through the rains.

Tadoba in the monsoon is a treat, made possible by the hard work of the forest department, who give us the privilege of being there.