

# Ginnorgarh Fort

## The Forgotten Hill Fort of Madhya Pradesh



Deep inside the forests of the Ratapani Tiger Reserve, about 60 km from Bhopal, stands the grand but forgotten Ginnorgarh Fort. Built on top of a high hill, this ancient fort has seen centuries of history, bravery, and changing rulers. Once an important military and royal center, Ginnorgarh today is a peaceful mix of history and nature—a great place for history lovers, trekkers, and nature enthusiasts.

### Location and How to Reach

The fort is located near Delawadi in the Raisen District of Madhya Pradesh. It stands about 1,000 feet above sea level, surrounded by beautiful teak and sal forests that are part of the Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary (now a proposed Tiger Reserve).

To reach the fort, visitors must trek 3–4 kilometers through scenic forest trails starting from the village of Delawadi. The trek is a bit challenging but offers amazing views of hills, forests, and wildlife.

### History of the Fort

Ginnorgarh was originally built during the Gond dynasty by the Gond rulers of Ginnor. In the early 18th century, it came under Dost Mohammad Khan, the founder of Bhopal State.

During his rule, the fort served as a military base and a royal retreat. It saw many battles and power struggles involving the Mughals, Marathas, and Afghans. Over time, as Bhopal State became stronger, the fort lost its importance and was eventually abandoned.

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### Architecture and Design

The fort shows a mix of Gond and Islamic architectural styles. Built mainly with stone and lime, it spreads across different levels of the hill, blending beautifully with the natural slope.

### Important features include:

- Thick stone walls and watchtowers offering wide forest views.
- Palace ruins where royal families once lived.
- Step-wells and water tanks designed to collect and store rainwater.
- Secret tunnels believed to be used for escape or defense.
- Temples and mosques, showing how different cultures coexisted.
- Even though parts of the fort are in ruins today, it still shows signs of its former grandeur and strategic importance.

### Legends and Stories

Many local legends surround Ginnorgarh Fort. The most famous one is about Queen Kamlapati, the brave widow of Nizam Shah, a Gond ruler. According to stories, she ruled from Ginnorgarh until she was betrayed by her minister, Dost Mohammad Khan, who later took control and founded the Bhopal State.

These stories, mixing history and folklore, highlight the fort's deep link to Gond culture and the early history of Bhopal.

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### Natural Beauty

What makes Ginnorgarh truly special is its natural setting. The fort is surrounded by the lush green forests of Ratapani, filled with tigers, leopards, sloth bears, deer, and many bird species. From the top, visitors can enjoy breathtaking views of hills, forests, and distant lakes. It's a paradise for nature lovers, photographers, and adventure seekers.

### Current Condition and Preservation

Today, Ginnorgarh Fort is partly in ruins, with some walls broken and covered in plants. However, the Archaeological Department of Madhya Pradesh and forest officials are working to protect and restore it.

Trekkers and tourists visiting Delawadi and Ratapani often include Ginnorgarh in their trips. With its calm surroundings, rich history, and natural charm, it has great potential to become one of Madhya Pradesh's most attractive heritage tourism spots.