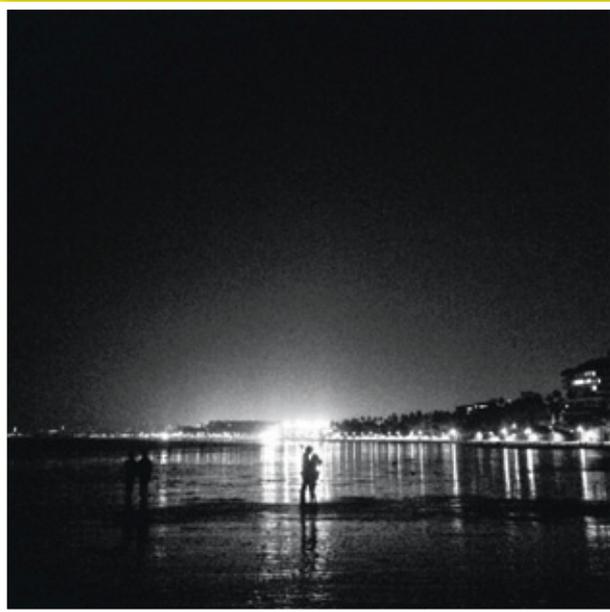


INDIA ON
INSTAGRAM

PHOTOGRAPH by **ANURAG BANERJEE**,
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Here's a square slot just for you

We're looking for strange and fantastic photos of our country. Photographer Paroma Mukherjee will handpick those that best convey that mood, and tell us why she loves them



Location- Mumbai, Date - January 2016



Send your pictures to instagramformirror@gmail.com with your name, profession and a note on where and when you took the picture

This lovely silhouette is a poetic tribute to the city and the couples who find love in it. The frame has been carefully composed with the city lights reflecting on the sea close to the shore as the couple takes centerstage in the most lit area of the photograph. And not letting any colour filters add noise to the image is a very sharp and good decision.

ON THE HOLY TRAIL

The Holy Land tour traces Christ's journey, bringing all the parables from the Bible to life

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Before visiting Jerusalem, I only had my imagination to rely on to bring parables from the Bible to life. But having had the opportunity to be a part of the Holy Land Tour that covered Jordan, Israel and a bit of Egypt, I was fortunate enough to experience myriad adventures. Such as landing in the middle of a vast Jordanian desert and feasting on the various sights that Bethlehem had to offer under airtight security — keeping in mind its political climate.

The tour was organised in such a way that every day, we were taken to places that were of some prominence in Jesus's life. He performed his first miracle in small town Cana, where he converted water into wine at a wedding. A church was built at the site, although records of the name do not exist. Today, the Franciscan Wedding Church is a popular site among couples looking to renew their wedding vows. The roads leading to the church — bordered by light brown stones, special to Jerusalem — were unusually narrow but even that didn't prepare us for the small-sized church that awaited us.

We entered the church, which had just enough space to accommodate around 15 pews and a small altar. In spite of the continuous inflow of tourists, the church holds only two services every day. As we left Cana, it was almost night time and the sky was a surreal blue. It takes the hustle and bustle of souvenir shops selling wine in bottles and jars to bring me back to reality.

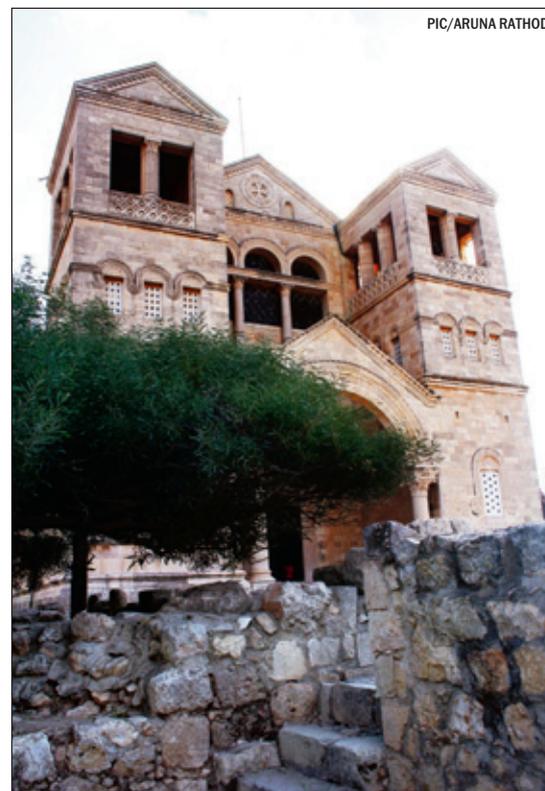
Next morning, we visited the azure river of Galilee, set against the backdrop of small, rounded hills. The Bible is replete with references to Galilee — it is the place where Jesus would go away on a boat to pray. On the banks of the river lies the Church of the Multiplication

all signs of commercialisation that one would associate with tourist spots. Apart from the orderly church shops, there were no hawkers trying to outdo each other. And unlike other churches, the Church of the Multiplication was circular — it also had a circular altar. To commemorate the miracle, restaurants in the vicinity offer only fish and bread to guests for lunch. In an effort to leave the rubble and ruins from Christ's time undisturbed, churches are built around them, thus preserving them well.

At the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, Jesus taught his apostles the prayer, *Our Father*. Every nook and cranny of the holy land is filled with such stories. We explored the streets where Jesus saw some of his worst days. Visiting the site where he was persecuted and made to ride a donkey on Palm Sunday before the Romans arrested him, left me and my fellow travellers humbled as the guide narrated details of the brutal crucifixion. I hung on to every word, and got goosebumps as he spoke about Jesus' resurrection. There were olive trees around, some of them maintained for years. Again, there are no garish signs announcing the significance of the site.

But it was not all gloom. Our trip was also punctuated with lighter, more fun moments like floating in the Dead Sea, enjoying the beach at the Red Sea and digging into some lip-smacking Mediterranean food, drizzled with olive oil.

But throughout the trip, I found myself questioning our cynical nature and reluctance to believe in miracles. And it was only when I boarded a flight back to Mumbai that it hit me — I am leaving Jerusalem as a changed person.



PIC/ARUNA RATHOD

The Church of the Transfiguration is located on Mount Tabor at a height of 1843 ft. The drive up to Tabor is picturesque and you can take a private vehicle to the top

where Jesus performed another miracle — the multiplication of five loaves and two fish to feed the huge crowds that had come to worship him. Situated atop Mount Tabor and overlooking the sea, the church was tranquil and safe from