

stay

HOTELS,
HOSTELS AND
NOTHING LIKE
HOME

* Once you've settled into your bungalow, it's time to plan some excursions. Luckily, the Jalans, who are passionate travellers, run a renowned tour company—Purvi Discovery—with tours all over the Northeast. From Mancotta, your options include trips to nearby Kaziranga (for the one-horned rhinoceros) and Dibru-Saikhowa (for a spot of birding) national parks, and Majuli (the biggest river island in the world) and Rukmini islands. Those of a more historical bent can see the Ahom monuments at Sibsagar or the World War II cemetery at Digboi

CUP OF Solace

If you want an indulgent taste of the planter's life, check into the Mancotta Chang Heritage Bungalow

✕ DIBRUGARH, ASSAM

The 'chang' in the name alludes to the stilts on which these bungalows—also called 'chang ghars'—were built, to protect against the flood waters of the Brahmaputra and to keep wild animals, especially creepy crawlies, out. More than a century old, Mancotta Chang served as the superintending manager's bungalow before the owners—Manoj and Vineeta Jalan, who belong to one of the oldest tea-growing families in Assam—converted it into a heritage stay about two decades ago. It has been spoiling guests with old-world service since then. A glorious rain tree overlooks the colonial-style bungalow, while across a gate lie sprawling tea gardens. Rooms have been added on the ground floor but, if you can, choose one of the upper floor rooms. The food is excellent and, for at least one meal, opt for the Assamese thali. Sunsets are best savoured with a nice G&T or a cuppa of full-bodied Assam. The accompaniment of choice at Mancotta Chang? Tea-leaf fritters!

—AMIT DIXIT

UMED BHAWAN 70

VIVEK SHUKLA 71