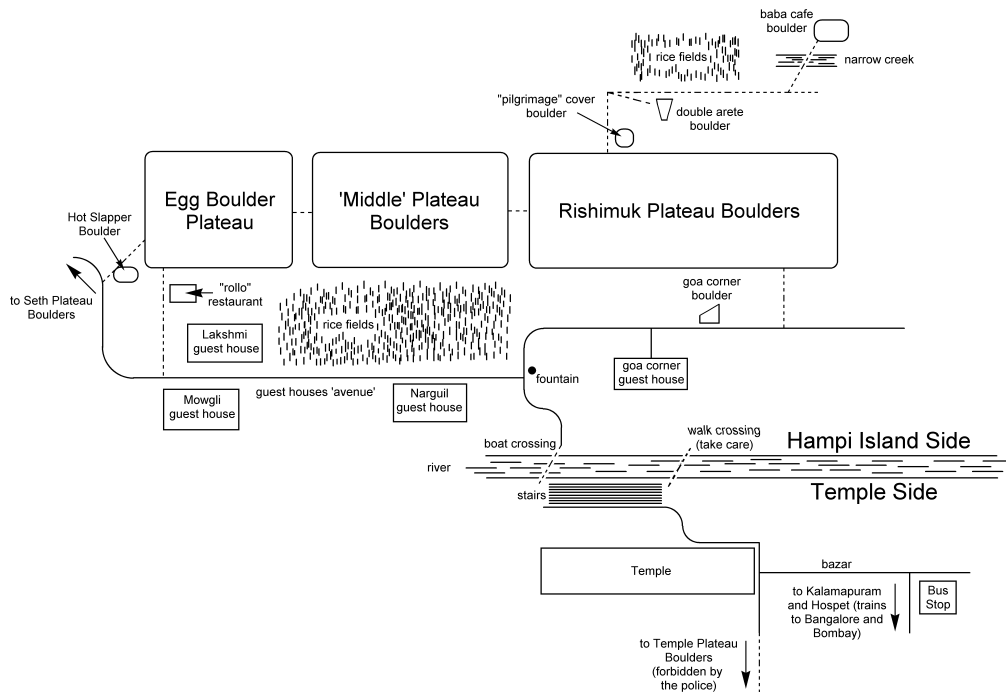


# Hampi Bouldering Guide

## *Basic Information*

### Hampi

Hampi is a little holy town divided in two areas by a river. From Hospet and Kamalapuram you will reach the temple side with the bazar. From there you can cross the river by boat or walking and get to the other side: Hampi Island. You will find hundreds of boulders in both sides of the river.



Hampi areas

## How to get there

Hampi is located in south india, about 350km NW of Bangalore, in the state of Karnataka. Hampi can be accessed from two big cities with international airports: Bombay and Bangalore, both located in South India. Once in the big city, Hampi can be reached by bus, train or taxi. The most comfortable, fast but also expensive option, is the taxi. Bus is probably the most uncomfortable transportation. A night train is better (get a 2nd sleeper class upper seat) but it's also very slow. In any case, expect very long trips. Our journey from Bangalore to Hampi in a hired jeep took 8.5 hours. The "highway" is full of big holes, some of them big enough to hold a whole car in it. Expect to see people all along the trip, and impressive things like naked monks enrolled in many-hundred kilometers pilgrimages. Our trip back to Bangalore with train took 10 hours.



Map of the Karnataka state in SW India.

## **Best season**

November-December with very dry (but also hot) weather is supposed to be the best climbing season. January-May is also dry but more hot. In June the monsoon rain arrives and then it rains a lot as indicated by the dark color bands on the big boulders of the river. We climbed in Hampi on December and in almost four weeks we only had one day with light rain.

The hot weather is the big drawback of Hampi as a bouldering area. Get up very early (by the sunrise or earlier) to catch the coolest temperatures. Have a good rest by 11 am or noon and then start again a couple of hours before sunset. At night or early morning it can be cold. It is actually possible to spend the whole day up in the boulder fields since there are many boulder problems in the shade. Take care with the sun, it's strong.

## **Accomodation**

Nowadays both sides of the river (Bazar and Hampi Island) are full of places to eat and sleep. In Hampi Island you will find very good pizzas in the "Mowgli" guest house. They also have very good vegetable biryanis (spiced rice with vegetables). There is also a guest house called "Narguila" serving excellent italian food. We found that this place has the most safe food (see next section) so it is a good place to go if you are sick (or recovering) but hungry. It also has a very nice atmosphere and the homemade tiramisu is amazing. Good coffee and tea is served as well. Food, beverages and accomodation at very low prices are easy to find here and all around india.

We slept at the "Lakshmi Golden Beach" guest house. It's not the cheapest option but it has nice and clean bungalows and it is quiet. The bungalows next to the rice fields are very nice but expect millions of frogs and insects yelling at night. It also has a big swimming pool that maybe one day will be full of water. They also prepare good indian food.

## **Getting sick in Hampi**

Apparently everybody get sick in Hampi at least one time. This usually happens during the first week of the trip and it consists of some mixture of headache, fever, dizziness, vomits and diarrhea. So be prepared for that and bring some medicines. The main origin of this problem is probably the water. Tape water is very dirty in Hampi (it is usually brown or yellow depending on the day). Moreover, there's a lot of dirt everywhere so it's hard to keep clean. I get sick with a bad chai (sweet milk tea with species) that in fact had a weird taste. So in Hampi, if you feel that some food or drink is not tasting well you better don't eat/drink it. In most cases, sickness doesn't

last more than one day and usually people just get it once in the whole trip. If you need medical assistance there's a hospital, which is supposed to be good, in Hospet.

## **The climbing**

Probably the most common Hampi boulder problem is a slightly overhanging face with crimps. Excellent for tanaka (campus board) lovers. As usual in bouldering, technique is very important, but physical strength is probably the most important thing here. The mental strength is also relevant since many boulders are quite high. For tsunami (highballs) lovers the cosmic cave area is a must. There are also many aretes that offer amazing technical and powerful lines like the "90° arete" in the Seth Plateau or the "Goa Corner" boulder next to the Rishimuck plateau. There are also some sloppers and good traverses. Roofs and specially slabs are very scarce. Hampi is maybe not the best area for beginners since most of the boulder problems (which are usually the most beautiful ones) are hard or very hard (6b and beyond).

In general the rock consists of excellent orange granite with lots of crimps. In most cases the quality of the rock is excellent although it might be loose in some boulders (take care with the crimps in the high top-out's when opening new problems). You will see thousands of boulders everywhere. We heard that there are 300 square km of boulders. However, not all of them are suitable for bouldering. Many boulders are just too high or too steep and holdless and in many spots the boulder fields are pure chaos: clusters of boulders very close to each other with deadly falls. The best spots for climbing are the plateaus: big granite plains (the ground is of bulk granite!) with scattered boulders. The main problem of the rock itself is that it is quite aggressive for the skin. If you climb hard for two weeks or more you will probably get a hole or more on the tips of your fingers unless you are very used to granite rock. So bring a good lotion for your hands.

Bring at least one crash-pad. If you don't bring a crash-pad then you can still rent it in the "rollo" restaurant in Hampi Island. They are also renting climbing shoes. They will be very grateful if you leave some of your used climbing gear at the end of your stay.

## **Climbing alternatives around Hampi**

There is Badami, about 100 km NW of Hampi. Bolted, semibolted and natural-pro routes plus some bouldering. Great potential for more. The rock is sandstone, offering a good rest from Hampi's granite. It is more wild than Hampi: eat-indian-cooked-rice-all-the-day and less accommodation options.

When going to Hampi from Bangalore by the highway you will see (about 3h away from Bangalore) some impressive granite domes with scattered boulders. A new climbing area is being developed here by indian and foreign people. It looks like it has great potential. Check [www.rockclimbing.com](http://www.rockclimbing.com) for more information.

## **Resting days**

Visit the temples, learn how to meditate, rent a bicycle or a motorcycle, roam in the boulder fields, explore the shops at the bazar, contemplate the chaos of Hospet, travel to the beaches of Gokarna or Goa, go to the artificial lake, see the ancient farming still done in India...

*Pirra + pdflatex*

*Montpellier, 15th March 2007*

*Photos and more info about Hampi and other areas in  
<http://qf.uab.es/david/ClimbingWebSite/index.html>*