just begun. In summer, it's only between 5pm and 7pm that the serious business of adventure sports takes off. The 50-odd guests staying on-location have found that vacations like these are the perfect way to satiate their adventurous streak and experience an adrenaline rush.

Adventure resorts across the country are attracting an increasing number of thrill-seekers to get their fix of knife-edged adventure sports. While some are opting for day trips, others stay overnight to get their fill of kayaking, mountain biking and the rough and tumble of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). So you can set off for resorts in Raigad or Sajjan in Maharashtra, Manesar and Sohna in Gurgaon, or Kanwar in Karnataka or Munnar in Kerala. Located a driving distance away from big cities, these destinations are becoming hotspots for adrenaline junkies.

The formula for resort owners is simple: offer something that takes you away from the hustle of city life but not too far from home either. Hans Resorts in Maharashtra’s Kolad village works on that premise. “People want something new and different,” says Hema Khater of Hans Adventure. The high-season at these resorts continues till February.

The concept is novel and all you need is an overnight bag and a pair of running shoes before setting off. The resorts do the rest: We usually get people who want to let off some steam. They want to do something other than just eat and drink while on vacation,” says Atul Vishtale of Botanix, where room rates start at Rs 4,500 (plus taxes, per night for two).

“We warn our guests that they shouldn’t be afraid of getting their hands dirty as this is not a run-of-the-mill holiday,” he says. The best part is that most of the adventure activities on the menu are included in the room cost (hot air ballooning through costs an additional Rs 1,100 and an ATV ride Rs 500 per
Go white water rafting or try out the flying fox (below) at Nature Trails’ resorts across the country.

PRECAUTIONS
- Enquire about availability of a doctor and a first aid kit at the resorts.
- Make sure you are well-hydrated before starting any activity.
- Fit your helmet tightly on your head; choose one that is the right size.
- Wherever possible, make a trainer try the activity before you do.
- When weather conditions (like wind, rain) interfere with the adventure activity, avoid it altogether.

As adventure tourism picks up in popularity, resort owners say that it’s the culture of corporate retreats and influx of school students that helps keep business afloat year-round. Says Deven Srivastav of Surjivan Resort, a 50-acre property on the Delhi-Jaipur highway which has dedicated many acres to adventure sports: “To attract bookings throughout the year, we offer discounts in summer to schools and MNCs to host their off-site events. Families and college students start arriving when the weather improves around September.”

Thrill-seekers upwards of five years are welcome at these resorts. “We’ve had 70-plus women rockclimbing and people older than that climbing rocks. As long as they are physically fit, we don’t mind,” says Joaquim Pinto, owner of Paradise Resorts in Karnataka.

WHERE TO HEAD
Adventure companies like Nature Trails in Maharashtra have several resorts offering a variety of activities. Its Kundalika rafting camp lures guests with white water rafting and kayaking by day and barbecues by night. Its 38-acre campus at Sajan offers a back-to-nature experience while the Koyana camp is surrounded by 35km of Koyana backwaters where one can enjoy windsurfing.

The company’s other resorts are just as exciting — Darshet is situated in a huge teak forest while Dabahosa has a perennial 300ft waterfall at hand. All of these are just a one-to-three-hour drive from Mumbai, Pune and Surat. “Our most in-demand sports are rappelling, kayaking and white-water rafting,” says Chitrangada Dixit, director of Nature Trails.

The non-air-conditioned cottages at the chain’s resorts start at Rs 5,000 (for a couple for a night). The cost includes the activities available at the resorts like rafting, kayaking and flying fox.

Paradise Resort in Karnataka offers tree-top cottages and camps in the wilderness for the more adventurous souls. The resort also has regular rooms for those who want service thrown in along with canoeing, kayaking, rafting, tubing and wind gliding (a package including all the activities costs Rs 1,090 extra per person). The resort rates start at Rs 7,000 for a night for two.

The resort owners are confident that the future of extreme tourism in India is zippy. The 36-acre Delta Adventure Resort in Lonavala in Maharashtra offers the longest flying fox escape in the country (it covers some 1,250m). Flying Fox will have you harnessed in place for an aerial adventure as you glide down cables between two poles. At Delta, a day loaded with adventure sports costs Rs 5,000 but if you’d rather stay the night then a villa costs Rs 12,000 for two and includes all activities at the resort.

The resort has a mind-boggling 88 other adventure activities to select from like rock climbing, trekking, aqua zorbing and artificial rock climbing. “Extreme tourism is a buzzword and Flying Fox is the most popular sport with guests,” says Pearl Surbhi of Delta. She says the appetite for adventure tourism is on the upswing with the segment seeing an over 10 per cent year-on-year increase.

Most resorts offer a chance to explore a host of extreme sports on the ground as also aerial and water-based activities. At Kanath Residency in the Raigad district of Maharashtra, guests are taken to Kansal waterfall, which is 7km by car followed by a 30-minute jungle trek. Here, professionals conduct kayaking, jet skiing and rappelling.

Amateurs can also try their hands (and feet) at zorbing, roller zorbing or hop onto an ATV ride or do some dune hiking. While zorbing takes you on a spin down a natural turf decline for about 200ft giant plastic ball, in roller zorbing two or more people can roll in a pool within a donut-shaped rubber ball. Adventure packages here start at Rs 750 per person for day visitors and if you choose to stay that will set you back Rs 5,400 and Rs 7,500 a night for two.

Adventure-seekers near Delhi can have a blast at Surjivan. Srivastav of Surjivan says that they also offer a

an environmental consultant who lived in the US for 14 years before coming back and setting up his resort 6km from the Goa border. “I’ve always been an adventure fanatic. So, I wanted to set up a place where you could get your adrenaline fix and also appreciate nature,” he says.

But if you don’t want to sweat it out, you could hit the hills in Kerala for a retreat to Camp Noel. The trip to this resort is an adventure in itself. Set in Mannar, Camp Noel is 36km away from the city and another 10km into the forest areas. “To reach here, you have to go off the mad,” says Craig D’Souza, manager, Camp Noel. Though the resort doesn’t organise any adventure activities, it offers tough, day-long treks within the forest area of Mannar. Camping, trekking, wildlife safaris and off-road adventures are included in the cost of the stay (starting at Rs 6,000 for two).

So, go ahead choose a heart-stopping adventure that you won’t forget in a hurry.