

TODAY'S traveller

CORPORATE BUSINESS, AVIATION, MICE & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

MARCH 2022 - ₹50

**BEST WINE
DESTINATIONS OF
THE WORLD**

**GO WILD IN THESE
SANCTUARIES IN
RAJASTHAN**

**PARADISE ON
EARTH- SCENIC
JAMMU AND
KASHMIR**

A MARCH OF VIBRANT FESTIVALS

TODAY'S
traveller



14TH ANNUAL TODAY'S TRAVELLER AWARDS 2022



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2022

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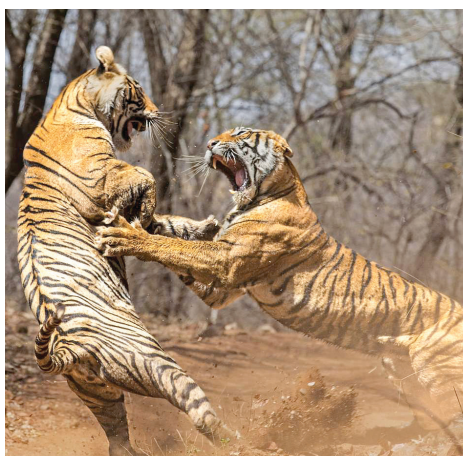


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BEST WINE DESTINATIONS OF THE WORLD

It's time to try something different and create a brand new travel bucket list with beautiful wine destinations. Wines are distinct and are best experienced in their own home where water, weather and soil retain original flavours and taste.

TT BUREAU

Wine tourism is a wonderful way of experiencing age-old cultures. Adding to the experience is the fact that various musicians and artists come to vineyard festivals to perform and set a lovely atmosphere for the night. So pack your bags and get ready for new experiences.

LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON, FRANCE

For music-loving wine fans, the best ticket of the year is Jazz à l'Hospitalet, a yearly celebration put together by noted winemaker Gérard Bertrand. Hosted at Gérard Bertrand's 38-room Château l'Hospitalet — which is a biodynamically cultivated wine domain — the celebration takes place over five days in late spring.

While this celebratory wine event is a springboard to the region, a major reason to visit the area can be found in the town of Narbonne, which lies inside the Corbières AOC. Narbonne itself is only a 10-minute drive from the Mediterranean Sea — a reason that makes it even more alluring because of the bright Mediterranean environment.

Corbières offers natural and biodynamic viticulture. The vineyards here mainly produce red AOC wine, characterised by fruity, spicy aromas. The grape varieties cultivated are Carignan, Syrah and black Grenache.

Here is a rich landscape of awesome countryside, a sea of vineyards, a background of rolling hills, where pinewood and garrigues dominate. While sampling wine or trekking or enjoying festivities do visit the citadels, the massif of the Hautes Corbières, the valley of the Torgan, or walk along the Canal du Midi.



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CAPE WINELANDS, SOUTH AFRICA

With non-stop flights presently available from most metropolitan cities to Cape Town, it's easy to get to South Africa's Cape Winelands, the home of the country's most recognised wineries. The drive from Cape Town to wine country requires only 45 minutes, and the drive is both scenic and attractive as you go through the towns of Stellenbosch, Franschhoek, and Paarl (each situated in the core of the district).

This region is a paradise for wine lovers who wish to explore this great wine growing region that boasts 45 Producer Cellars, 457 Private Wine Cellars, 5 Wine Regions and 22 Wine Routes. There are guided tours and tastings at vineyards which range from boutique wineries to sprawling estates.

The best way, of course, is to wither cycle between vineyards or take the Wine Tram from Franschhoek, with a hop on and off at various wine estates as and when you please. Visitors can sample wine and food pairing at picturesque food outlets at vineyards and tasting of the classic Pinotage, South Africa's smoky, red wine, as well as the wonderful Chenin Blancs makes this wine region a premier wine destination.



CAMPANIA, ITALY

Italy is the fifth-most visited country on earth, getting more than 60 million vacationers yearly. While this tells you there is hardly any region 'unexplored' places, a fresh and beautiful locale is Campania. Here is a little known gem which is an iconic wine destination.

Situated on the "shin" of Italy's boot, Campania is home to Naples (and its reality popular pizza), Mount Vesuvius, the Amalfi Coast, and the Pompeii ruins. The district represents considerable authority in wines especially red grape Aglianico, and white grapes Greco, Fiano, and Falanghina.

The Amalfi Coast is also a highlight with dreamy coastal destinations, like the seaside resort of Sorrento and the beautiful islands of Capri and Ischia in the Tyrrhenian Sea. You will see small picture-perfect villages like Positano and Ravello which are built along the cliff line and offer stunning views of the coast and the sea. No wonder this stretch of coastline is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site.

PORTO, PORTUGAL

Set to open in mid-2020, the Fladgate Partnership's World of Wine is a vacationer dream that will offer five wine gallery meetings, nine eateries and bars, a wine school, and different display spaces, all inside Fladgate's distribution centres in the city of Porto.

The event expects to feature Portugal's reputation as a noted winemaking country, which is already known as a global forerunner in 'wine stopper' creation.



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The charming city of Porto offers visitors a great history, local and sophisticated shopping areas, and welcomes you to its waterside promenades and cafes. Porto, with its noted historical centre, is recognised as a UNESCO world cultural heritage site and marks the gateway to your Portuguese wine travel. Here is a landscape to inspire you with its famous wine regions; Douro (the birthplace of Port wine) and the unmatched Vinho Verde.

Porto's vicinity to the Douro Valley, which can be reached by boat, train, or car, makes visiting real grape plantations a reality while remaining in the city. Yet, with a flourishing eating scene and neighbourhood aperitifs to boot, you can be pardoned for saving that outing for another time.

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

Austria's capital, Vienna is a centre of music, workmanship, and espresso culture. A lesser-known yet similarly attractive reason to visit is that Vienna is the world capital producing huge amounts of wine and well-developed viticulture and wine-related culture in the city. By huge, we're talking about 630 producers of wine, from urban vineyards or more than 700 hectares of vineyards — 85% of which are committed to white wines like Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, and Grüner Veltliner.

The best season to experience Vienna's vineyards is during fall, when the city has its yearly Wine Hiking Day. With three courses traversing a sum of 15 miles, guests can stroll the city's grape plantations while sampling tasty food and wine pairings. There are castles spotted along the course, as well, and provide a broad perspective of the city as a pleasant background.

A detour to a must-visit wine tourism destination is the small Wachau valley in Lower Austria. You must sample wines grown here, which is the best of Austrian wines - Riesling. Wachau is a picturesque UNESCO World Heritage Site with vineyards, ancient monasteries and castles. Don't miss the stunning baroque Melk Abbey and the Göttweig Abbey near Krems.



TENERIFE, SPAIN

Spain is right now going through a thrilling winemaking renaissance, and it's on the island domain of Tenerife that considerable interest is seen among travellers. Tenerife has five wine regions: Valle de la Orotava, Ycoden-Daute-Isora, Abona, Tacoronte-Acentejo and Valle de Güímar.

This small area covers an area of 8,000 hectares in Tenerife. Wine production in Tenerife began in the 15th century and in the 16th century, its wines became a byword for excellence among leading figures, and monarchs in Europe.

Tenerife's grounded wine course and most of its bodegas (wineries) are situated in the upper east of the island, near the city of San Cristóbal de La Laguna. Guests can partake in a variety of wines made utilizing native assortments, including the sensitive Listán Blanco and Listán Negro and Baboso Negro, which is vinified into incredible, hard reds. A special mention goes to the Malvasía wines. If white wine is a favourite, then you are in the right place as 80% of the Valle de Güímar wines are white.

There are a hundred wineries on the island where visitors can discover the flavours and nuances of Tenerife wines. Enjoy guided tours, or go biking to explore the wonderful vineyards and take in the tastings and food and wine pairing.





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A MARCH OF VIBRANT FESTIVALS

India is a vibrant and diverse land consisting of all the major world religions, and as many regional and local auspicious days and events to commemorate, and so there is much to celebrate in individual and distinctive ways.

TT BUREAU

As people say, when you live in India, each day is a festival and when you celebrate each day as a festival the spirit of vivaciousness, joy, holiness and compassion remains, in a big or small way, in your heart.

There are ten major festivals and fairs which occur in the month of March in India. While almost all of the festivals in March celebrate spring and a good harvest season, it is remarkable how different each celebration is and how local cultural values find expression in the celebrations.

HOLI

This Spring festival is an ancient traditional festival famously known as the festival of colors. It is one of the major festivals of Hindus and of utmost importance. It marks the beginning of spring and is also celebrated as a mark of triumph of truth

over evil. It is a two-day festival but in a few states of India it is celebrated for up to a week.

The timing of this festival is synchronized with the moon which means every year the date or sometimes month of celebration will be different, mostly it occurs in the month of March.

There are several ideologies behind why Holi is celebrated, some of which being;

- The most common idea is to celebrate the victory of Lord Vishnu's Narshima avatar over the demon King Hiranyakashyap which signifies triumph of truth over evil.
- Many people celebrate it as the arrival of spring and end of winter.
- People of Braj celebrate this festival till 'rang panchmi' as they celebrate the divine love between Radha and Krishna.





HOW IT IS CELEBRATED

On the night before Holi, which is also called Chhoti Holi, the ritual of Holika Dahan takes place. In this ritual people, light up a large bonfire and circle and pray around it. It is the mark of burning of Hiranyakashyap's demon sister who took his son on his order and sat on fire pyre with his son Prahlada sitting on her lap as a motive to kill him. Despite having a boon that night, Hiranyakashyap's sister got burnt while the devotee son Prahlada survived.

The next morning is the morning when people gather on streets wearing old clothes and smear color on each other. It is a large colorful party which happens all across India on the same day at the same time.

On this day, people also visit their friends and relatives' homes with color and the traditional 'bhang thandai', and Holi sweet of 'gujiya'.

THE ELEPHANT FESTIVAL

This festival occurs in the city of Jaipur in Rajasthan state of India to celebrate Holi in a unique way by celebrating the sacred animal.

Elephants are considered as very precious animals in India as according to ancient Hindu texts, they were one of 'navratnas', which reappeared during the time of stirring of the ocean.

Elephants are of great significance in Jainism and Buddhism too and they were always associated with Indian royalty as Indian royals have been using Elephants for travelling, in wars and in ceremonies for a long time.

Rajasthan has a long history of legends and royalty, warriors and dynasties. It is thus fitting that the capital Jaipur





becomes a hub for this festival. The owners beautifully decorate their elephants with vibrant colors, saddle cloth and heavy jewelry, female elephants are decorated with anklets. The most beautifully decorated elephant is awarded. Sports like elephant polo, tug of war between elephants and nineteen men and women, elephant racing etc are vibrant activities that mark the celebrations.

This festival usually occurs on the eve of holi at Jaipur's Old Ground, opposite to Sawai Man Singh Stadium.

GUDI PADWA

This is a traditional Marathi and Konkani Hindu festival which marks the region's New Year. The festival is majorly celebrated in Maharashtra, Goa and union territory of Daman. It is a springtime festival celebrated on the first day of 'chaitra' month according to the Hindu lunar calendar. The first 'chaitra' is celebrated as Gudi Padwa in Maharashtra, Chaitrai Vishu or Puthandu in Tamil Nadu and Ugadi in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

It signifies the arrival of spring and reaping of 'rabi' crops and in rural Maharashtra, the festival is often dedicated to Lord Shiva as the community carries Gudi Kavads together to Shiva Temple.

On the day of the festival, courtyards of villages and houses should be cleaned and plastered with cow dung. Everyone dresses up in new clothes and hoist 'guddi' flags.

INTERNATIONAL YOGA FESTIVAL

It is a seven-day festival celebrated in the first week of March in Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand. The





International Yoga Festival is distinct from International Yoga Day. Rishikesh is also known as the birthplace of yoga and the yoga capital of the world.

Many trainers and experts of yoga from all around the world visit this place during the time of festival. You will be provided with an opportunity to learn from the great enlightened spiritual leaders, master yoga teachers and wellness specialists from all around the world.

The programme starts at 4:00 am with 'kundali sadhna' which ends at 9:30 pm with traditional songs, kirtan and dance. You can easily customize each day as per your personal needs.

CHAPCHAR KUT FESTIVAL

Celebrated on 5th March (mainly in the first week of March) in the north east state of India Mizoram, this is the festival

in which people celebrate as the harvest of bamboo shoots. The festival is said to have originated in 1450-1500 AD. It is estimated to be celebrated as thanksgiving to gods for saving people's life during the clearing of hill forests for Jhum cultivation.

The festival starts with eating traditional foods and drinking and at night men and women dance to traditional beats. Both men and women dress up in their traditional clothes on this day. Women wear the traditional outfit of 'vakiria'. Some of the activities which takes place during this festival are;

- Chhawngnawh: It is a pre-Christian ritual in which boiled eggs are stuffed in each other's mouth.
- Dance form: The main dance form which is performed is 'cheraw' dance with some other dance form like khualam, chai and sarlamkai.





- Arts and crafts and photo exhibition.
 - Mizoram traditional games and costume parades also occur.
 - Various stalls with traditional cuisine can be observed.
- This is a vibrant and harmonious festival with a wonderful display of local traditional cultural dress, dance, food and beliefs.

SHIGMOTSAV

This festival is celebrated on 21st March in the state of Goa. Dates of this festival may vary as it is celebrated in the month of Phalgun that is March, beginning on 9th moon day to the full moon day.

This festival is basically celebrated to mark the change of season, bidding farewell to winters and welcoming the spring season and serves as the most famous festival of Goa in the month of March.

The festivities initiates with the bathing of the deity and covering it with saffron clothes. On the fifth day of the festival which is also known as 'rang panchami', people color each other with red 'gulal'.

On the 11th to 15th day, the villagers get together in temples wearing colourful clothes, carry flags called 'dhwajas', beat drums, blow the flute and other instruments, and perform various lively folk dances.

BRIJ FESTIVAL

Celebrated in Bharatpur, Rajasthan between 13th to 14th March, that is 'shukla paksh' of 'phalgun', a three-day festival of color, dance and music. Since braj is the birth place of Lord Krishna, people here take every chance to celebrate their lord in the best possible way.

In this festival people dress as Radha and Krishna and perform the iconic dance of 'Raslila'. Many artists also join this festival and put up a performance depicting the life of Krishna. People also take holy dip in the Banganga river in the early morning and perform various rituals.





DOLJATRA FESTIVAL

Also known as Dol Purnima, this festival is celebrated on 18th March in the Indian state of Sikkim, Assam, Odisha and some other regions. It is a full moon celebration dedicated to Lord Krishna and Radha. The festival is called Dolyatra in the Indian state of West Bengal, while the same festival is called Dol Purnima in Assam and Odisha.

In West Bengal, milk preparations which include home-made butter, cream, and panchamrit are offered to everyone in the community.

For Bengalis, the festival holds more significance as it marks the birthday of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu — a revered Vaishnavi saint credited with bringing modern “sankirtana” to the states of Odisha and West Bengal.

According to mythological belief, the first day of DolJatra is called “gondh” as Lord Krishna prepares to visit Ghunucha’s place and the second day known as Dol is celebrated with colour and sweets, as well as sprinkling colour at the feet of elders. The festival is celebrated over four days with celebration, sweets, colour, prayer and processions.

HOLLA MOHALLA

Started in the early 18th century this Sikh festival is celebrated between 18th-20th March. It is celebrated majorly in the North Indian state of Punjab.

Hola Mohalla is said to have started in the 17th century by the Tenth Sikh leader, Guru Gobind Singh, as a symbol of valour, brotherhood, and spirit of fraternity.

In this festival Sikhs present their skills with traditional





weapons. This festival initiates at one gurudwara with beating drums and ends at another. This one-week festivities are marked by daring feats and mock battles with actual weapons, processions in traditional clothes with weapons on display and stunts and acts of bravery through sports like bareback horse-riding, tent pegging, standing erect on two speeding horses and various other war-like feats.

A spectacular sight is the awesome procession of Nihangs in traditional dress as they ride past on horses and elephants and on foot showcasing traditional weapons and demonstrating their skill and mastery with them.

This is followed by kirtan, music and poetry competitions and traditional food served as a community. By witnessing this festival, you can catch a glimpse of the entire history of Sikhs.

GANGAUR FESTIVAL

This festival is celebrated between 18th March to 4th April in the state of Rajasthan. This festival is dedicated to Goddess Parvati as it celebrates marriage and love.

In Madhya Pradesh the Gangaaur festival is a celebration of Lord Shiva and goddess Parvati and has several rituals to be followed by women.

In Rajasthan, the Gangaaur festival also celebrates the same theme of eternal bond of Lord Shiva and goddess. Parvati is referred to as Goddess Gauri and rituals include married women keeping fasts for the health of their husbands while unmarried women pray for a good partner to marry.

In this festival small clay idols of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati are created and beautifully decorated. On the last day of this festival, which is also the most important day, a large gathering with dance and music takes place and people walk

together towards the nearest water body to submerge the clay idols.

As the royal families of Rajasthan also participate in these festivities, the colourful traditional folk dances and songs, dresses and jewellery worn by women and the idol being taken in a palanquin in processions are all part of a spectacular celebration.



Destinations



GO WILD IN THESE SANCTUARIES IN RAJASTHAN

Rajasthan is usually known as the land of royals, nobility, warriors, forts and palaces. Geographically we only think of the state as a landscape dominated by the Thar Desert.

TT BUREAU

Paradoxically, one of the most striking features of Rajasthan are its forests and National parks. Many endemic species are endangered, and many wildlife sanctuaries have been set up to protect them. The forests go beyond Rajasthan all the way till Madhya Pradesh.

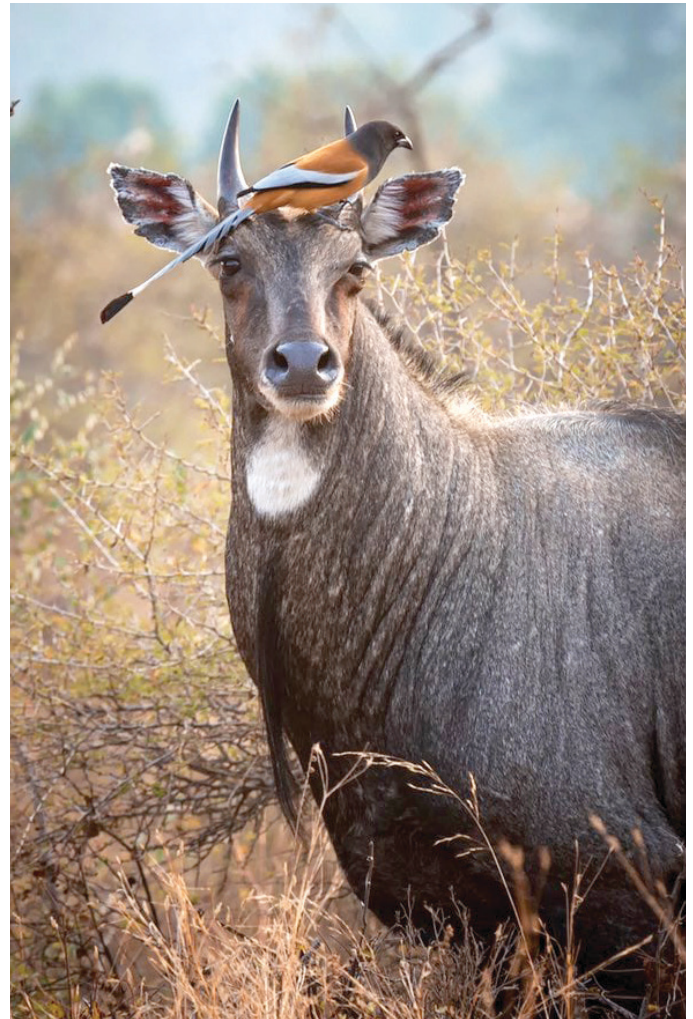
RANTHAMBORE NATIONAL PARK

This is one of the most famous National Parks in India, which was once home to the most photographed tiger, lovingly named "Machli".

Ranthambore is located 10 km away from Sawai Madhopur. The park has been divided into 10 zones and is home to many tigers that have been given names along with numbers, such as Sultana, Noori, T-60, and so on. Wild life specialists suggest that Zone 4 and Zone 2 have the highest chance of spotting tigers.

Zone 10 is one of the most picturesque forests one could ever see. You catch beautiful views atop of a cliff with trees and water trickling down from an unknown source. There is also an artificial pond from where birds can be spotted. Zone 2 and Zone 4 have lots of historical structures such





as the Raj Bagh Ruins. Padam Talao is a beautiful lake from where crocodiles can be spotted.

This national park is a must-visit, as it leaves you with beautiful memories of the forest even if one was not lucky enough to spot a tiger.

JHALANA LEOPARD SAFARI PARK

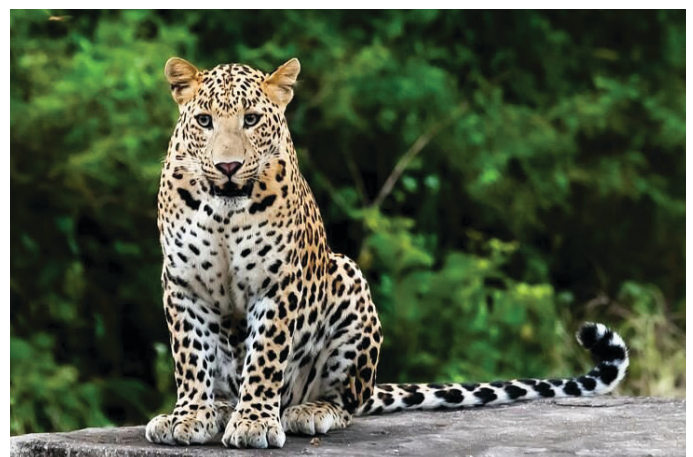
This is a 23 sq km park, and is only 10 km away from Jaipur. The park has been operational since 2016 and has 2 safari routes open for wildlife enthusiasts.

This park is unusual as it is the first Leopard Reserve in India and is home to as many as 30 - 35 leopards, of which

6 - 7 leopards have their territories in the park. Spotting the silent and deadly assassin is chilling to the spine, as the sharp predator's eyes chase after a hunt. Such is the brutality of nature.

Apart from the leopard, you can spot striped desert cats, and jungle cats, Indian civets, desert foxes, hyena, jackals and a variety of deer, among others.

The Aravalli range, the oldest mountain series of India, surrounds the park and there are over 285 bird species which can be spotted here. The park is rich in flora and fauna. The chirping of the birds feels very magical and fills your heart with joy.





SARISKA TIGER RESERVE

This tiger reserve is an enchanting forest, in Alwar District. The forests are full of beautiful topography, scrub-thorn arid forests, dry deciduous forests, grasslands, and rocky hills. It is part of the Aravalli range and the Khatiar- Gir deciduous forests ecoregion.

As the name suggests it is home to India's Pride "The Bengal Tiger", and is also home to many other species like Indian leopard, jungle cat, striped hyena, golden jackal, chital, and many more. The park is also ethereal for bird lovers where species such as golden-backed woodpecker, Indian eagle-owl soar the skies. There have been tigers that have been relocated here from other forests especially from Ranthambore, as also a few villages relocated in the critical tiger habitat, the first village relocation being in 'Bhagani'.



THAR DESERT NATIONAL PARK

The abstract undulating landscape of Thar is home to many species in this awe-inspiring extreme weather. The barren landscape is just an illusion, because when looked closely, there is a fragile ecosystem. The heat may be punishing, but there are many species that have adapted to this climate.

Located near the towns of Jaisalmer and Barmer the Thar Desert National Park has several attractions, particularly bird species such as the great Indian bustard, long legged buzzard, chestnut-bellied sand grouse, and many more. Some mammals that can be spotted are the Indian fox and Chinkara deer.

The national park should be one's checklist as the dunes look very beautiful when the sun starts to set. Spotting wildlife just adds icing to the cake.





KEOLADEO NATIONAL PARK

This spectacular wetland invites a lot of bird species especially during winters and is a must for all bird lovers. You will also find reptiles such as crocodiles, salamanders, and mammals such as jungle cats, and the sly fox.

A straight road goes till the end of the park with various trails protruding to different sections of this bird paradise. It is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Home to many bird species, the park is also known as Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary. It is home to more than 200+ bird species. The wetlands are beautiful in their green marshy areas, water bodies, flora and fauna.

There is a temple on the premises which is named Keoladeo. One of the most fun activities along with bird-spotting is cycling along the straight road. There is also a spot where two nilgais often come close to humans and a small pond where you can feed turtles.

NATIONAL CHAMBAL WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

This wonderful sanctuary is situated near river Chambal where the border of three states meets Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. This narrow stretch of the eco-reserve is under the protection of the three states. It is also known as the National Chambal Gharial Wildlife Sanctuary, home to crocodiles, Gharial and rich birdlife,

The Chambal River Sanctuary is home to more than 316 species of migrant and resident birds including Indian skimmers, ruddy shelducks, bar-headed geese, black-necked stork, red-crested pochard, sarus crane among others.

The park protects endangered endemic species such as the Blind Dolphin or the Ganges River dolphin, red-crowned roof turtle. It is home to several species such as Indian wolf, striped hyena, blackbucks, jungle cat, and the list is endless. This park should be on one's watch list.



BUCKET LIST OF INCREDIBLE EXPERIENCES FOR YOUR INDIA TRIP

Are you planning on taking a trip to India and not sure what to do? India is the definition of diversity and with diversity comes incredible experiences for your India trip to try out.

TT BUREAU

Here is a ready-made bucket list of all the amazing experiences you can enjoy in this beautiful country.

TREKKING IN THE HIMALAYAS

The solitary act of trekking in the Indian Himalayas and waiting for your feet to continue forward is as close to enlightenment as one can come. The Indian ranges are not only isolated, tall and gorgeous, but they are also often taken for granted or largely visited by Indians. Trekking in the Himalayas is a

once-in-a-lifetime experience and the adrenaline rush you get when you reach your destination can never be matched.

CELEBRATING HOLI

In India, the Holi Festival of Colors commemorates the triumph of good over evil and the defeat of the demonic Holika. Every year on the day after the full moon in the Hindu month of Phalguna, which falls in early March, it is commemorated with abandonment and joy.





People celebrate the beginning of spring and other Hindu religious holidays by marching through the streets and sprinkling colorful powders on each other, the larger community and even passers-by while dancing and singing.

SKIING IN PAHALGAM

You wouldn't generally associate skiing with India. However, Skiing in Pahalgam's breathtaking terrain is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. This town, after Gulmarg, is one of the best possibilities for experiencing the actual essence of Kashmir's awesome beauty. Aru, a short distance from Pahalgam, is the premier skiing destination, surrounded by a breathtaking scenic environment and an abundance of tranquillity, making skiing a pure delight.



STARGAZING IN THE THAR DESERT

Few memories will leave you as fascinated, and you will be ever grateful for the opportunity to view these natural wonders in a dark transparently clear sky where stars and the moon seem to hang large and tantalizingly low.

No wonder, then, that in Jaisalmer, a much sought activity is stargazing. For a long time, stargazing and astronomy have been an obsession. Not only is stargazing a dream come true for nature photographers but capturing the gorgeous sky in Jaisalmer in your mind is as well a dream come true.





MOTORCYCLE TRIP TO RANN OF KUTCH

The Rann of Kutch is an unending stretch of salt flats which seem to continue forever as the white land merges with a brilliant blue sky. This landscape is so stark, surreal and overwhelming that it promises to take your breath away.

The isolation for kilometers is both nerve-wracking and spectacular for bikers, with a little oasis of water bodies and shrub forests doubling as homes for pink flamingos and wild asses. Interestingly, it is rich in biodiversity with sandgrouse, francolins and the Indian bustards as well as Indian wolf and desert fox.

VISITING RAMOJI FILM CITY

Do you love the Indian film industry and would like to know where the magic of cinema takes place? Escape to Ramoji Film City, a fantastic land full of thrills and surprises around every corner.

There's something special for you here, as it is the world's largest integrated film city and India's first thematic holiday destination with cinematic charm. Ramoji Film City, the world's largest film studio complex, is visited by millions of people every year from all across India, according to Guinness World Records.





WALKING ON THE ROOT BRIDGES OF CHERRAPUNJI

Root bridges are produced in the depths of north east India, within sight of the India-Bangladesh border, in one of the wettest areas on the planet. These amazing living root bridges are thought to be over 500 years old. While there are dozens of such root bridges scattered throughout the valleys between the villages of Mawsynram and Dawki, some of these are conveniently accessible and have tourist amenities nearby.

A local guide is required to view the bridges in more isolated places. One must take a walk on the unique Double Decker Living Root Bridge (65 km from Shillong). The height of this 3-kilometre-long growing root bridge is 2400 feet and crossing it is a once-in-a-lifetime experience

CAMPING IN COORG

In a word, Coorg's misty highlands, thick teakwood and sandalwood forests, and acres of tea and coffee estates are breathtaking. It's also known as Kodagu, and it's been labeled "India's Scotland." Camping in Coorg is one of the best recreational activities to undertake when visiting this region, as the soothing sceneries and peaceful ambience bring you closer to nature and away from the city commotion.



VISITING THE TAJ MAHAL

You can't come to India without visiting one of the seven wonders of the world. The Taj Mahal has been a famous tourist destination for a long time, attracting tourists from all over the world. Come, walk along the road alongside the reflecting pool with fountains up to the mausoleum, which is sculpted in soft and pure marble and adorned with semi-precious stones, and where the Queen rests in peace with her King in the calm of paradise.

Sit on one of the marble steps or benches and simply take in the momentous beauty of this beautiful mausoleum built for the love of his life by Emperor Shah Jehan. Just sitting and taking in the sight is an unforgettable experience.

TASTING DELICIOUS INDIAN FOOD

Last but not least, try authentic Indian food. We all know that Indian food is among the best cuisines in the world. Coming to India, and eating the varieties of Indian food and dessert is a gastronomical experience, which you are likely to develop a taste for, for the rest of your life.. The amalgamation of aroma, flavors, and colors will make your mouth water involuntarily.

Because each region uses spices, herbs, and products grown locally, and regional cuisines can be quite different from one another. Remember that apart from succulent meats and gravies, Indian food comprises the largest spread of delicious vegetarian dishes you can ever dream of. So be sure to try the food of every state you visit!



EXCITING PLACES IN & AROUND DELHI

Which exciting places in and around Delhi can one visit and relax is an oft asked question by visitors to the city - and even by its restless residents.

TT BUREAU

While travel is a given for everyone, post the Covid travel restrictions, the real question is "how many travel to adventurous or offbeat places?"

Your travel bucket list should always be updated. Most people go for short weekend getaways and picnics. Travel suggests a mood for some fun and merrymaking.

While travelling, people just have refreshment and fun in their mind. They do not put deep thought into the kind of experiences they will have while visiting the place.

Here are 15 exciting places in and around Delhi that will not only help you break free from your day-to-day routine but will also inspire and give you an experience of a lifetime.

New Delhi is a metropolitan city inviting people from all walks of life. Over the years the lives of the people have

undergone a change. Life in the urban metropolis has become much faster. Many areas have grown popular, and at times suffer from overcrowding.

There are areas and attractions that have gone under the radar and are the hidden gems of this city. These attractions are perfect to slow your daily life down, giving you room to breathe and relax.

EXCITING AND ADVENTUROUS PLACES AROUND DELHI TO VISIT AND RELAX

DELTA 105, GURUGRAM

With the theme of Army, Delta was started by an army retired personnel, Major Dinesh Sharma, along with the jawans from





his regiment. At Delta 105, they provide visitors with fulfilling experiences by recreating life in an army camp and glimpse into 'what makes a jawan'? With great regiment food and fun activities for all age groups, this place not only provides fun-filled experiences to its visitors but also makes them more aware of the life of an army official.

Delta 105 has recently launched the longest Zipline of almost 225 metres with the highest starting point of about 40ft.

It is a one of a kind concept that recreates the whole army life experience for students, friends, family, and corporate colleagues to enjoy, learn and cherish a lot of army activities under one roof for a day's picnic or as a getaway, giving campers the ultimate camping experience.

These include navigating through a maze to build the presence of mind and stamina, paintball in body armor and

battle fatigues, and a guided tour of an artificial war zone among other things. A day here will give you a sneak peek into a jawan's life and what goes into making him a national fighter. The army theme park is established in an area of 26 acres of land.

Apart from these fun-filled activities, Here at camp stay we also give you the option of experiencing how jawans stay in peace and war, how to fold the National Flag, rest under tents made of parachutes once used by the Indian Air Force, War Zone created on a 300 ft border made of bunkers, trenches, minefield, etc, and much more to give you a once-in-a-lifetime unique experience.

The experience at Delta 105 includes activities like a magic show, horse ride, puppet show, etc. This place is worth visiting as it can teach you a lot about the Indian army.

The park also has amazing food options that can be relished throughout the day. The highlight is the regional food of troops of various regiments served in the Jawan's village. The guest will be briefed on the sand model about the layout of the camp, expectations from visitors and do and don'ts, etc.

JUMPIN HEIGHTS, RISHIKESH

Jumpin Heights was launched in 2010 by Ex-Captain Rahul Nigam, with an endeavor to introduce youth and adventure enthusiasts to extreme adventure sports and bring it on a commercial scale to India, with International Safety Standards.

They have a well-trained and professional team from New Zealand, the country which commercialized BUNGY. Jumpin



Heights has launched the second destination of Bungee Jumping (55 meters) at Mayem Lake, Goa in association with Goa Tourism Development Corporation in August 2019.

Jumpin Heights is the only Bungee facility to have been certified and recognized by the Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India for Bungee operations in the country. Since its inception, the brand has earned high acclaim for its safety standards.

It has been continuously striving to bring the best of adventure for travel enthusiasts and adventurers. Consequently, it has changed the face of extreme adventure in the country, including the way organizational safety is perceived in India.

WORLD OF WONDER, NOIDA

The best fun place to visit with family and friends for a thrilling experience can be World of Wonder, to experience the thrill of water rides without any sun strokes and sun exposure.

Sometimes racing fun is covered here too, the wonder speedway in North India's best and largest professional two strokes- go-karting track,

It is located in Sector 38 Noida. Ranging from kid-friendly chair swings, paddle boats, bumper cars, and mini trains to more thrilling options, like roller coasters and a drop tower.

The Park has 26 slides and water features. It has India's largest north Indian McDonalds. World of Wonder can be a dream travelling destination.





KINGDOM OF DREAMS, GURUGRAM

For the best experience to visit with your family The Kingdom of dreams popularly known as KOD located in Gurugram can be the best place to visit, The culture gully inside the kingdom of dreams is magnificently built over a large area and is an air-conditioned indoor boulevard where different cultures of India meet to give a rise to a vibrant and thriving culture space.

Culture gully, India's first-ever skydome has stalls capturing the culture of fourteen different states with local fine arts, cuisine, and street arts. Mesmerizing folk dance or other culture shows that solely depict the rich diversity of our country can not be neglected while visiting KOD. The trip can be informative about Indian culture.

This air-conditioned boulevard is spread across 100,000 square feet with theme restaurants and live kitchens from 14 states of India, represented in full grandeur with their representative architecture and decor. Walking through Culture Gully tasting the many specialties of the various Indian states is a gourmet's delight.

10 OFF BEAT PLACES TO VISIT AND RELAX IN DELHI

INDIAN AIR FORCE MUSEUM, PALAM, NEW DELHI

People who get fascinated by the Indian air force should visit the Indian Air Force museum. There is an indoor



gallery that comprises of photographs and memorable moments of Indian air force displayed there including bombs, missiles etc.

Actual aircraft which were there in Kargil War are also displayed there, 15 different types of aircraft that have formed the backbone of the Indian air force including Westland Lysander that was the first craft to fly through Khyber Pass, Hawker Hurricane and Hawker Tempest.

Also on display are helicopters, anti-aircraft guns, vehicles, radar equipment, and captured enemy vehicles.

This place can inspire and give your kids and you authentic information about the Indian air force.

SANJAY VAN

This is a lush green and thickly wooded city forest near Vasant Kunj and Mehrauli. It is a very good place to indulge in activities like cycling and bird watching.

This forest has amazing dirt tracks/trails qualified for running too. It is a great place to visit early morning when temperatures are low with light breeze. Natural areas in city like these helps relax our mind, and choose our pace.



ASOLA BHATI SANCTUARY

This is an area in Southern Delhi and Northern Faridabad. The sanctuary is home to a variety of flora and fauna such as Egyptian Vulture, Red Headed Vulture, European roller.

Some rare birds can also reside here that is black francolin and grey headed fish eagle. If lucky one can also sight Indian Leopard, Jackals, and Black Nape Hare.

There are also many historical monuments around this area such as Surajkund which is an ancient reservoir, and Anangpur Dam.





JAHAPANA FOREST

This lush green city forest in South Delhi has a 7km track/trail, connected to various areas of Delhi mainly Greater Kailash, Saket, Masjid Moth, Chirag Delhi. It is a good place to go for a morning walk or run.

One can spot deers, hares, Nilgai. There are number of benches which have been laid out at regular intervals throughout the course, so one can exercise and take rest accordingly to his own pace. It is truly a hidden gem and perfect place to spend time while being surrounded by nature.

AGRASEN KI BAOLI

This is a historical monument in Hailey Road near Connaught Place. This monument is a step well built by King Agrasen. Not much is known about this monument which makes it fascinating.

It is also here the movie like PK (starring Amir Khan) was shot. There were also reports of the monument being a haunted site. A very photogenic place and has very mysterious aura around it.



BAL BHAVAN

It is a huge institution where children take part in various activities such as painting, sports, photography and many more, you name it. Don't worry adults with children are allowed in the premises.

You can have a ride on the toy train which perimeters the whole area. You can feed birds and hares. Interacting with children is fun and seeing them take part in various activities is nostalgic, also filling you up with energy. There is also a fish aquarium, a library, mini zoo and a laughing mirror room.

SULABH INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM OF TOILETS

This is one of a kind museum show casing various types of toilets and also sustainable practices of toilets. The museum





also hold significant historical information of toilets and has been divided into three sections. Ancient section which studies and exhibits models Toilet system from Harrapan Civilization.

Medieval section has toilets from Akbar's Fort in Fatehpur-Sikri near Agra, Gingee Fort of Tamil Nadu and Golconda Fort of Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, on display. Modern section has toilet related cartoons, photographs of toilet from reputed manufactures taken from their catalogues, public toilets of different countries.



NATIONAL HANDICRAFTS DESIGN GALLERY AND EARTH TREASURES MUSEUM

This museum is in Rajiv Gandhi Handicrafts Bhavan, Connaught place. This museum boasts and displays a large collection of minerals, gem stones, crystals and rare dinosaur egg.

Another major highlight is that it showcase Shiva Ling Made out of crystal, moon rock and mars rock. All these displays are an eye candy and just mesmerizing to watch.

NATIONAL GALLERY OF MODERN ART

This gallery has a collection of 1700 + works by 2000+ artists. These artists include Thomas Danielle, Raja Ravi Verma, Rabindranath Tagore, Abandrinath Tagore, Nandalal Bose, Ramkinkar Baij and many more.

The collections are very beautiful and are well preserved. Every summer NGMA holds" Namisha" where one can take part in activities like sculpting, painting etc.



MAJNU KA TILLA

While Going north of Delhi, Majnu Ka Tilla is the place to be. Home to Tibetan refugees, this is the place to learn about Tibetan culture. You can visit the 'Tibetan Monastery'.

There are also great places to try Tibetan Cuisine which are 'Zamsa Restaurant' and 'TeeDee Hotel'. Having bowls of 'Thukpa' and eating 'momos' during cold weather is a really warming experience.

JOR BAGH

Jor Bagh is a very quaint and relaxing place with small parks. You can visit the local market which has some relaxing cafes, a bookstore named 'The Bookstore' have a good collection. It is near 'Lodhi Market', which has a variety of shops. 'Chidambaram' is must if you want to try south Indian Food. The Fried 'Idli' is something to die for.





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KICK-OFF WITH ADVENTURE SPORTS IN RISHIKESH

Rishikesh has come a long way from being India's yoga centre to being India's adventure capital. The best adventure sports in Rishikesh can be found in and around the mountain township. Rishikesh has long been known as the uncontested Yoga centre of the globe, with pilgrims from all over the world flocking to this ancient and sacred city in search of spirituality.

TT BUREAU

RISHIKESH

It is situated on the banks of the Ganges River in the Indian state of Uttarakhand and is flanked on three sides by hills. People come here to practise meditation, learn Yoga practises, and sometimes just to enjoy the peace of mind it provides.

Rishikesh is also recognised as India's Adventure Capital. The Ganges, India's living mother goddess, is one of the world's few rivers with the mystique of the Ganges.

Rafting on the water of wisdom is a very unique experience. On a date with Mother Ganges, enjoy and discover a once-in-a-lifetime adventure. The beginning of your addiction will be your first interaction.

Rishikesh is a popular destination for camping, hiking, bungee jumping, Gaint Swing, Cliff Jumping, Trekking, Rock Climbing, and Backpacking.

The adrenaline rush that comes with adventure sports is what most people live for. The adrenaline rush of adventure





sports awakens the inner kid in everyone. Rishikesh is one such location that provides some of India's top adventure sports.

Apart from these, Rishikesh has a plethora of additional attractions and activities for the tourist in you. It offers music and cuisine schools, as well as being the beginning place for the Chota Char Dham Yatra.

It's the ideal location for learning about Indian history and culture in all of its splendour and richness. It is home to a plethora of Ayurvedic centres that provide treatments and classes.

ADVENTURE SPORTS IN RISHIKESH

RIVER RAFTING – BEST RECREATIONAL OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

River rafting, out of all the adventure activities available in Rishikesh, is arguably the one that has given the city its reputation as an adventure destination. This activity, also known as white water rafting, includes battling the river's severe waves at varying levels of difficulty.

To top it off, it takes place on the Ganga in Rishikesh, commonly regarded as the mother of all Indian rivers. It is one of the top Rishikesh water activities to participate in throughout your visit.

RAPPELLING – ONE OF THE FUN ADVENTURE SPORTS

Rappelling is another popular Rishikesh adventure activity for thrill-seekers. Because of the steep valleys and enormous boulders, this enjoyable adventure requires a person to climb down the hills and rocks. It is one of the best places to do it.



BUNGEE JUMPING – FOR A THRILLING EXPERIENCE

Adventure activities in Rishikesh are ideal for thrill-seekers. One of the top bungee jumping places in Rishikesh is Mohan Chatti. It stands at a height of 83 metres, and adventure sports aficionados from all across India consider it one of the top Rishikesh adventure sports places.

This is one of the top adventure sports in India to attempt for those aged 18 to 60. Furthermore, after you complete the leap, you will receive a certificate. It's fantastic!

FLYING FOX – EXHILARATING ADVENTURE SPORT

Explore some of Rishikesh's most luxurious resorts. Flying Fox is one of the most popular adventure activities to participate in Rishikesh.



This one-km route is home to Asia's biggest track, allowing you to fall from top to bottom in the most thrilling way conceivable. This adventurous vacation in Rishikesh is something we suggest to everyone.

MOUNTAIN BIKING – FOR BIKE LOVERS

Mountain biking is one of the finest ways to experience Rishikesh's mountainous terrain. Because this riverside resort has a diverse terrain that includes steep mountains, rocks, forest, and river pathways, travellers may appreciate the beauty of the area in a sporty and personal way.

GIANT SWING – ROPE BASED ADVENTURE SPORTS

The Giant Swing, another of Rishikesh's top rope-based adventure sports, may be done at the Mohan Chatti while you're there for bungee jumping. Imagine a rope swing, but on a much larger size (83 metres) with considerably more fun and adventure.

This is one of the coolest things to do in Rishikesh, and adrenaline seekers will love it. This thrilling sport involves swinging through air over deep green valleys on one of the largest and highest swings you can ever imagine.

CLIFF JUMPING – SUPER SENSATIONAL ADVENTURE SPORTS

Cliff jumping is available in a number of locations in Rishikesh. It's one of the most accessible adventure sports in Rishikesh, and it's a must-do for everyone.

You may also set the height from which you wish to cliff jump and then take that risk you've always wanted to take. And believe us once we say that you simply won't be disappointed.

WATERFALL TREKKING – FOR A FUN EXPERIENCE

Waterfall trekking is not strictly an adventure sport in Rishikesh, but it is a blend of adventure and joy. Travellers may go up to the waterfall and marvel at nature's beauty. This is also one of the great places to go for a picnic or to relax and appreciate the natural beauty of the area.

VALLEY CROSSING – FINEST ADVENTURE SPORTS

Valley crossing is one of the best adventures sports in Rishikesh which will be tried by people of all age groups. Similar to flying fox in its basic element, this is often one activity that has the facility to form your trip worthwhile.

KAYAKING – POPULAR ADVENTURE ACTIVITY

Kayaking or canoeing, one of Rishikesh's most relaxing adventure activities, allows a person to explore the waterways in a tiny kayak or boat as he pleases.

Yes, some preparation is necessary, but those who are experienced with it or are doing it for the first time can practise and do it at a pace that is comfortable for them.

An interesting fact: Rishikesh is one of the top kayaking locations in India. It is, without a doubt, one of the most thrilling Rishikesh water activities.



PARADISE ON EARTH - SCENIC JAMMU AND KASHMIR

The unbelievable beauty of Jammu and Kashmir can never be expressed in words. No wonder it is known as a “Paradise on Earth”. We have selected some scenic locations in Jammu and Kashmir that you must visit on your next holiday planned for this stunningly beautiful destination.

TT BUREAU

SRINAGAR

Srinagar is the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir. The state is split into two by the river Jhelum. The most famous attraction here is the Dal Lake. You can enjoy Shikara rides, trekking, boating, skiing and so much more.

The other attractions are Mughal gardens, religious and historical sites, and the many lakes. Srinagar is also known as the “Land of gardens and lakes”.

The most surprising experience here is the floating vegetable market on Dal Lake. Asia’s largest Tulip gardens are also in Srinagar.

The best attractions to see include the Mughal Gardens, Tulip Garden, Hari Parbat Fort, Pari Mahal, Kahnqah Shahi-Hamdan, Hazratbal Shrine, Shankaracharya Temple, Kheer

Bhawani Temple. You can enjoy local cuisines like Kashmiri pulao, Aloo dum, and do not forget to buy Kashmiri shawls and dry fruits.

HOW TO REACH:

The nearest airport is Sheikh Ul Amal International Airport, 11 km away and the nearest railway station is Srinagar Railway Station, 12 km away. The distance from Delhi to Srinagar is 815 km.

SONMARG

Sonmarg means the “Meadow of Gold” and that can be observed during the spring season as there is a widespread bloom of yellow crocuses.





It is home to the famous group of rivers Lidder, Sind, and the Neelum. Trekking to the Thajiwas Glacier starts from Srinagar (the base point of this trek). You can also enjoy river rafting on the gushing Indus river. Sonmarg is Kashmir's most scenic location and a dream place for many.

The best attractions to see include Vishansar Lake, Krishansar Lake. Thajiwas Glacier. There are many restaurants

to experience local food and the most popular buys here are saffron, walnuts, stone jewellery.

HOW TO REACH:

The nearest airport is Sheikh Ul Alam International Airport, 102 Km away and the nearest railway station is Srinagar Railway Station, 101 km. The distance from Delhi to Sonmarg is 888 km.

GULMARG

Gulmarg is known as the "Meadow of Flowers", a perfect place for adventure seekers. It offers the world's second-highest gondola ride to Apharwat Peak and the third-highest ski resort.





The activities to enjoy here are skiing, snowboarding, trekking, and more adventure activities. Not to be missed is the winter festival organised by the Indian Army and Tourism Ministry every year.

The best attractions to see include Gulmarg Biosphere Reserve, Strawberry fields, Apharwat Peak. Rogan Josh, Dum aloo are famous dishes to try here and you can buy saris and handicrafts from Gulmarg.

HOW TO REACH:

The nearest airport is Sheikh Ul Amal International Airport, 57 km away and the nearest railway station is Srinagar Railway Station which is 56 km away. The distance from Delhi to Gulmarg is about 861 km.

PAHALGAM

Pahalgam is breathtakingly beautiful, and the Himalayan ranges and mountain rivers make this place extremely beautiful.

Adventure seekers can try out trout fishing, trekking, and angling to enjoy here. It is also the base camp for popular trekking getaways like Amarnath, Aru Valley, Kolhoi Glacier, and other high-altitude destinations.

The Aru Valley and Betaab Valleys are prominent attractions in Pahalgam. You can also enjoy a pony ride or explore on foot.

The best attractions to see include Betaab Valley, Mamal Temple and Sheshnaag Lake. Gustaba, Sheekh kebabs are the most popular food and dry fruits are a must-buy.



HOW TO REACH:

The nearest airport is Sheikh Ul Alam International Airport, 89 km away and the nearest railway station is Srinagar Railway Station, 93 km away. The distance from Delhi to Pahalgam is about 800 km.



PULWAMA

There are multiple reasons to visit Pulwama. The positive vibes of Pulwama are truly the reason, and its scenic beauty lends its magic for which it is known as the "Delight of Kashmir".

The widespread saffron fields, the largest milk production, and the mesmerizing atmosphere make this place a heaven. Places to visit here include Aharbal Waterfalls, Shikargarh, and Avantishwar Temple.

The place is famous for its historical monuments and religious sites. If you are planning a long holiday then plan a seven-day Tarsar Marsar Trek, as it is really amazing.

Mountaineering and skiing during the winters are famous activities here. The best attractions to see include Aharbal Waterfalls, Shikargarh, Avantishwar Temple.

HOW TO REACH:

The nearest airport is Sheikh UL Alam airport 31 Km away nearest railway station is Srinagar Railway Station, 34 Km away. The distance of Pulwama from Delhi is about 793 km.

ARU VALLEY

Aru Valley's scenic beauty is surreal to believe. You can enjoy the stunning views of this valley on a pony ride or on foot. Book a local homestay and enjoy the traditional delicacies at the roadside hotels. This place is perfect for nature lovers. You can bless your eyes with the views of Kashmir valley from the Aru Valley.



This place is a must-visit because of the astounding views and scenic beauty all around. Surprising but true is the fact that you won't be able to get enough of the natural scenic views here. You can enjoy activities like horse riding and hiking here. The best attractions to see include the Aru river, the Lidder river. Try eating and shopping from the local shops, which are full of local delicacies and local handicrafts of the finest standards.

HOW TO REACH:

The nearest airport is Sheikh UL Alam airport, 101 Km end nearest railway station is Srinagar Railway Station, 105 Km. The distance of Aru Valley from Delhi is about 812 km.

YUSMARG VALLEY

It is believed that Lord Jesus stayed here for a short duration and he got extremely impressed by Yusmarg Valley's spectacular atmosphere. Yusmarg means "Meadows of Jesus".

This is a scenic mini hill station of Kashmir and is popular amongst couples. For adventure seekers who enjoy trekking for long periods in remote locations, Yusmarg Valley is an ideal place. Trekking and pony riding are popular activities here.

The best attractions to see include the foaming river Dudhganga, Alpine Lake, Nilnag Lake, and Sang-e-safed. Small cafes and shops are famous here for local food and handicrafts.

HOW TO REACH:

The nearest airport is Sheikh UL Alam Airport, 47 Km away and the nearest railway station is Srinagar Railway Station, 45 Km away. The distance from Delhi to Yusmarg Valley is about 604 km.

PATNITOP

Patnitop is one of the most famous locations in Kashmir and also the most developed location. People usually come with their loved ones to spend quality time in peace.

During the winters you can enjoy paragliding at Dewariyai and in the summers make a reservation for a round of golf at its 9-hole course. Both activities are major crowd pullers in Patnitop.

There are three freshwater springs (which are considered to have medicinal properties) in the area where you can also take a refreshing bath.

The sweet dish, 'Patisa' is a must-try, which is prepared in pure desi ghee, it will take you to another world when it melts in your mouth. Trekking, paragliding, and skiing are some of the famous activities here.

The best attractions to see include Nathatop, Sanasar Lake, Naag Mandir, Patnitop Circular Road, Chennai-Nashri Tunnel. Do try chocolate barfi, sund panjeeri, rajma with rice, and kaladi kulcha. Local handicrafts are a big draw for shopping.

HOW TO REACH:

The nearest airport is Jammu Airport which is 115 Km away and the nearest railway station is Udhampur Railway Station which is 46 km away. The distance from Delhi to Patnitop is 657 km.





BETAAB VALLEY

Betaab Valley is among the most beautiful places in Kashmir. You can enjoy the beautiful views of this Valley while having a cup of tea or Kashmiri Kahwa at the roadside café. Betaab Valley is a stopover en-route to Chandanwari.

The location is famous because some of the blockbusters of Bollywood were shot here like Kashmir Ki Kali in 1964 and Bajrangi Bhaijaan in 2015. The place is a perfect combination of delightful views and peace and is really a must-visit place in Kashmir. The best attractions to see include Tulian Lake, Mount Kolahoi, Mamaleshwar Temple. The local cuisines are a must-try here. Local handicrafts are good buys.

HOW TO REACH:

The nearest airport is Sheikh Ul Alam Airport, 96 Km and nearest railway station is Srinagar Railway Station, 99 Km. The distance of Betaab Valley from Delhi is about 806 km.

JAMMU CITY

The city of Jammu is known because of the presence of Mata Vaishnodevi Temple, a significant pilgrimage spot for Hindus.

The other temples here are Peer Baba Temple, Mahamaya Temple, and Peer Khoh. The presence of so many temples makes this city a religious site and this is the reason Jammu is known as the 'City of Temples'.

Other than the temples the other attraction is the Bahu Fort. The beauty of this city will make you feel relaxed and energised.

The best attractions to see include Vaishno Devi Temple, Raghunath Temple, and Bahut Fort. Kashmiri Pulao, Rajma,

and Aloo Dum are prominent dishes and the famous bazaars are Ragunaath Bazaar, Bahu Plaza.

HOW TO REACH:

The nearest airport is Jammu Airport and the nearest railway station is Jammu Tawi. The distance of Jammu City from Delhi is about 592 km.

SHOPPING FACTS

(Some excellent buys which can be found in local shops everywhere in Kashmir include Pashmina shawls and blankets, Kashmiri carpets, Dogra jewelry, silver jewellery, traditional jewellery like Kundals, Nupura, Chaunk Phool, Tika, Balu and Kada, traditional dresses of Kashmiri men and women, paper mache and wood curios, Kashmir willow bats, Crewel embroidery fabrics, and dry fruits)



7 FUN SHORT ROAD TRIP DESTINATIONS TO EXPLORE WITH YOUR FRIENDS

There is no better sense of freedom than going on a fun short road trip, and who better to share it with, but your best buddies?

TT BUREAU

The past year in lockdown has kept many of us in India cooped up at home, with no escape or chance to reconnect with our squad and create some amazing memories.

Furthermore, according to 'Back to Travel' research by Booking.com, 68% of Indian travellers stated that not being able to travel extensively in 2020 has made them yearn for travel even more in 2021.

Take your masks, create your favorite playlist, and hit the road for a fun and memorable road trip with your friends, when it is safe to do so!

MUMBAI TO TIRACOL

Take a lesser-explored road with your friends as you travel from Mumbai to Tiracol, a small quaint village near River Terekhol enjoying the scenic coastal drive which passes through the Mahasagari Marg (Maharashtra State's Coastal Highway). En route you will also pass by some beautiful destinations like Alibaug, Ratnagiri, Tarkali, offering some breathtaking sea views.

Roll down your windows to let in the cool breeze and seaside aroma set the right vibe. The ride is long, but along the way, you will find ample dhabas serving authentic



Maharashtrian food. As you pass through the ghats, make the most of the drive with a carpool karaoke to celebrate your friendship.

DELHI TO BADKHAL

For Delhiites looking for a brief getaway from the hustle and bustle of the city, Badkhal, a village located around Faridabad is 57.7 km from Delhi and is a perfect destination for a road trip with your friends. The quickest route is through Mahatma Gandhi Marg though travellers might have to consider the

local state Covid restrictions to ensure a hassle-free journey. While the landscape on the route is rather urban, once you have reached Badkhal, you can get ready to soak in the wilderness.

Badkhal has a lake which is a quiet and uncrowded camping spot where you can sit back with your friends and reminisce about your old memories.

Light a bonfire and spend quality time with the gang around the lake or indulge in adventure sports like boat rides, kayaking, and trekking in the surrounding area.





KOLKATA TO MANDARMANI

West Bengal has an array of lesser-explored wonders, and Mandarmani, a seaside village, is one of them. If you and your friends are seeking a relaxing getaway, Mandarmani is among the top endorsed destinations for relaxation by Indian travellers on Booking.com. Starting from Kolkata, the 180 km route to Mandarmani is quite interesting as you get to see the wonderful scenery of rural Bengal.

There are quite a few good accommodation options in Mandarmani for you to choose from depending on the budget. And if you and your friends are in the mood for some adventure go for a jet ski ride, banana boat ride, and parachute ride along the beach.

CHENNAI TO YELAGIRI

A particular favourite among bikers is the route from Chennai to Yelagiri, a small hill station in Tamil Nadu where travellers can reach through two routes – either via Kanchipuram or Vellore. Both routes are known for their nature trails with lush greenery, waterfalls, and especially hills, that are popular among the trekkers in India.



The route does test your riding skills with the number of hairpin bends along the way, so in case not everyone is a skilled biker, consider carpooling there instead, for safety reasons. Once you reach Yelagiri, enjoy the natural scenic beauty in the company of your friends or spend some time in the midst of hills and the most beautiful man-made lake, the Punganoor lake.





BENGALURU TO MANDARAGIRI BETTA

If a short road trip to an offbeat destination from Bengaluru is what you are looking for, then Mandara Giri Hills or Mandaragiri Betta is a mere 60 km away and one of the best bets one would take. Pack your bags and hit the road along with your friends to Mandaragiri Betta, a small hillock in the Tumkur district of Karnataka with well-maintained roads, so the ride is pleasant and takes you through several green patches.

Once you reach Mandaragiri Betta, you can indulge in authentic Kannada-style food and also visit one of the most eye-catching structures, called Digambar Jain Heritage center. This hall resembles a peacock feather with a simple idol of the saint in the middle and is ideal for meditation after a tiring trip. The aesthetic beauty of the hall also makes for an Instagram-worthy picture that you can store as a beautiful memory with your buddies.

AHMEDABAD TO TANOT

If you are looking for an adventurous road trip with your friends, opt for a road trip through the uncluttered route from Ahmedabad to Tanot, nestled in the quaint village of Jaisalmer. A 657 km drive into the Thar desert, this route is





a good 12 hours from Ahmedabad. Along the way, you will pass through some beautiful towns and villages of Tharad, Barmer, Jaisalmer, and Ramgarh where you can experience some local culture.

Passing through the Thar desert while watching the sunlight hit the sand dunes is a great sight to cherish. And once you reach the destination, enjoy some local cuisine and delicious dairy options that Tanot has to offer. The Tanot Mata mandir is a must-visit destination located close to the Longewala border post in Rajasthan which was the battle site of the India-Pakistan war of 1971.

DARJEELING TO PELLING

Nothing brings out Darjeeling's blooming beauty more than a road trip to Pelling. At 74kms from Darjeeling, you get to pass

through small villages catching glimpses of the monasteries and abundant waterfalls. The four hours of the journey feel like heaven and even more when you drive through the hills and lush tea gardens.

If you and your friends need to take a break to refresh, there are small tea shops along the way that serve warm and delicious tea. Pelling, a beautiful hill station that lies in the foothills of Mount Khangchendzonga, has many places for your squad to explore in a day.

Make a wish for a never-ending friendship at Khecheopalri Lake, which is locally considered to be the one that fulfills your wish. You can also go for a picnic at the Sewaro Rock Garden when it is safe to do so, or simply take a walk on the Pelling Skywalk but make sure to buy your friends some souvenirs from the local bazaar.





Food

TOP 10 FOOD TRENDS OF 2022

In 2021, it was all about experimenting with niche trends and breaking norms while preparing a dish to make it exotic, memorable, and instagrammable, among other things.

TT BUREAU

Food history, origins, and understanding have all sparked fresh interest as a result of the enhanced awareness. The previous year, more Indians learned to prepare sourdough and enjoy it as a morning staple.

Despite the fact that the previous two years seemed to have been meant to lead us directly to comfort food, a team of Whole Foods analysts believes 2022 will be the year when people are willing to try something new.

The annual list of 10 food trends for 2022 includes both new foods and repurposed versions of old favourites.

HERBAL TEA

This has been one of the pandemic's knock-on effects. Due to reduced immunity and the side effects of Covid, the herbal tea market has grown in the last year or two.

People drank herbal tea to ease stress and anxiety, promote sleep, and strengthen their immune systems. According to projections, it will continue to grow in the year 2022.

According to Industry Intellix, "the herbal tea market is expected to increase at a CAGR of 4.2 percent over the next five years."





Chamomile tea, yellow tea, oolong tea, white tea, matcha tea, Earl Grey tea, and even Kashmiri Kahwa are some of the famous herbal teas that will become widespread in 2022.

KOREAN CUISINE

While Korean films and music became increasingly popular, Korean cuisine began to attract its own legion of devotees around the world. Colors, textures, and the flavorful convergence of sweet, savoury, and spicy are all present in K-Cuisine.

Korean instant snacks have become a pretty ubiquitous sight in stores, quickly appealing to the public. While these are quick fixes, Korean cuisine is also making its way into eateries, with menus featuring anything from Korean-style fried chicken to Gochujang-laced appetisers. Korean condiments have also witnessed a significant surge in sales around the world since then.

VEGAN MEAT

Faux, fake, mock, meat analogues, and plant proteins are all terms used to describe vegan meat.

These are products that have textures, flavours, or appearances that are similar to animal-based meat. They contain a variety of components, including soy, modified vegetable protein, and wheat gluten, to name a few.





SUNFLOWER SEEDS

Sunflower seeds are steadily making their way into snacks, salads, and other dishes. Sunflower seed consumption isn't just a TikTok craze; it'll grow even more popular in 2022.

This year, many grocery goods will include this plant-based protein source, lipids, and other nutrients. Sunflower seeds also provide many of the other health advantages.

Sunflower seeds are abundant in omega-3 fatty acids, plant components, fibre, vitamins, and minerals. They also have some plant protein in them. They may aid in the reduction of inflammation and chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes type 2."

NON-ALCOHOLIC DRINKS

Mocktails and low or no ABV (Alcohol by Volume) cocktails are becoming more popular as healthy lifestyles become more popular. This is because the alt-cult of 'Sober Curiosity' appears to be having a moment with GenZ.

What exactly is it? Simply refraining from using alcohol. And as this trend takes traction, the beverage sector is scrambling to appeal to this demographic.



Coolberg and &Stirred, meanwhile, have a variety of flavor-infused non-alcoholic beers and premixed mocktails such as the Hibiscus Cosmo and the Mexican Mule.

Even well-known alcohol brands such as Kingfisher, Heineken, and Budweiser have recognised the task and launched alcohol-free beers. Restaurants have also jumped on board, adding more mocktail options to their menus in order to stay up with the current trends.

PLANT-BASED DIET

Plant-based foods, which have been progressively gaining currency, are destined to reach new heights with the new trends and a greater attention on the effects of our eating practises.

While broader culinary trends such as nut-based milks, plant-based meats, and vegan alternatives see fresh arrivals, India's food scene appears to be undergoing a rebirth.

As big fast-food companies such as McDonald's, KFC, and White Castle include plant-based proteins into their menus, it's apparent that food manufacturers have created meat substitutes with flavours that rival their conventional counterparts.





YUZU

Yuzu, a lesser-known citrus primarily grown in Japan, Korea, and China, is sweeping the culinary globe. This tangerine-sized fruit is bitter and tangy, and it's showing up in vinaigrettes, hard seltzers, mayos, and more.

Chefs are employing its lime-lemon-grapefruit flavour to highlight soups, vegetables, noodles, and fish in restaurants. In 2022, expect to see this fruit flourish both in and out of the supermarket.

POTATO MILK

Potato milk, as per the study, will compete with almond milk, soy milk, and even oat milk. It'll be so popular that potato milk will find its way into coffee shops. It goes on to claim that potato milk is low in saturated fat and sugar, which is the sole reason why it is so popular around the world. Potato milk has been discovered to be dairy-free, fat-free, and cholesterol-free.

Potato milk is reported to have the same amount of calcium as cow milk. Not only that, but specialists claim that potato milk has more minerals and vitamins than any other vegan milk variant.

TURMERIC

Turmeric, which has long been famous in some regions, is here to stay. This spice is commonly found in golden milk lattes, but it's also in cereals, sauerkraut, and even ice cream



sandwiches. In India, the spice is used in virtually every curry and is an integral part of Indian cuisine.

Turmeric's effect on blood glucose levels suggests that illnesses like diabetes and hypoglycemia may be well supported by this colorful spice. Turmeric's effect on immune function translates to winning battles against germs and viruses. This wonder spice also helps in preventing cancer, liver issues, skin conditions, and cholesterol.

MORINGA

Moringa, popularly known as the "miracle tree," has long been utilised as a herbal cure in India, Africa, and other parts of the world. Moringa leaves are high in nutrients, and in some regions of the world, these rapidly growing, drought-resistant trees have been utilized as a supply of nutrition to combat malnutrition.

It may be obtained in powder form and added to produce magic in smoothies, sauces, and baked goods in the United States, where it is gaining traction as matcha's latest alternative. Frozen sweets, protein bars, and packaged grain blends are just a few examples of where it might be found.





THERE'S MORE TO KASHMIRI FOOD THAN YAKHNI

Kashmiri cuisine is considered a celebration of life, a journey of gastronomy that reflects the rich influence of Persian, Central Asian and Afghan history in its cuisine.

TT BUREAU

Kashmir is a culinary paradise, not only on account of rich Mughal and Arab influences in the preparation of food, but also the unique combination of another influence - the Kashmiri pandit signature touch in the preparation. In addition, it has absorbed some Ladakhi cuisine influences of boiled or steamed food preparation which makes it healthy and nutrient-dense.

This delicious combination of vegetarian and non-vegetarian food, sets apart the cuisine of Kashmir. You will find prominent touches of the unique flavour of Dogra ancestry which features vegetarian fare like Rajma, Aloo Dum, Kashmiri Pulao and Patisa. Add the Kashmiri tradition of the frequent use of spices like cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, saffron, etc and you have a cuisine that leaves you with memories of a feast.

And feast it is. Waz'a's — is the name given to Chefs in Kashmiri and the traditional Wazwan — derived from the words Waz'a and Waan meaning a shop, brings forward a feast of a 10- course meal which can expand to include 20 dishes and more. The preparation of a Wazwan is elaborate, almost to the point of being an art and a typical component of Kashmiri culture. At a traditional Wazwan, guests in groups of four, share courses of a meal served in a large copper plate called a traem. While rice is a staple, most dishes are prepared with lamb or chicken with a few vegetarian dishes.

Check out some of these amazing dishes that will tantalize your taste buds. And yes Yakhni is a delicious gravy made from succulent pieces of mutton infused with saffron,

cardamom, cinnamon, and bay leaves in a yogurt based gravy. In its lighter form, it is often the base for many dishes including pilaf (pulao) and light, spicy shorbas or soups.

MUTTON ROGAN JOSH

Mutton Rogan Josh is a Kashmiri delicacy comprising lamb and an aromatic gravy that is popular in Kashmir and is now a must have on menus all over India. Rogan Josh is traditionally cooked using a slow-cooking method using authentic spices used whole, that give it its distinct flavour. The dish is served with a light gravy that has a powerful spice aroma that makes your mouth water. Rogan Josh pairs nicely with Sheermal, Naan, Chapati, Rice, Biryani, and Raita because of its delicious flavours.





AAB GOSHT

Lamb cooked in milk gravy is a Kashmiri speciality meal. Mutton pieces are cooked in a milk-based stew with a dash of heat in the form of black pepper powder in Aab Gosht, or Kashmiri Mutton Curry. This dish takes less than an hour to make and is a delicious and unique dish to try out. It's a traditional Kashmiri meal that's usually served with rice.

DUM OLAV

This Kashmiri Dum Aloo is hot and delicious, with baby potatoes simmered (dum cooked) in a spicy curd (yoghurt) based gravy or sauce. There are two popular variations of Dum Olav, the Kashmiri Dum Aloo which is the Authentic Spicy Version and the Dum Aloo Restaurant Style which is the Rich Creamy version with North Indian Flavors. Dum aloo can be served with chapatis, naan, pooris, or jeera rice.

GOSHTABA

Goshtaba is a traditional Kashmiri dish. It's made in a unique style with a range of exotic spices. The mutton dumplings taste great when the flavours of the spices and herbs seep into them. It's a delicious combination of a delightful gravy with just the right consistency and a blend of wonderful mutton dumplings. The dish is often garnished with coriander leaves and a few strands of saffron before serving.

MODUR PULAV

Modur Pulao is a Kashmiri Sweet Pulao made with nuts and dry fruits. It's lovely aromatic rice that's made with a lot of ghee. It's a spicy and nutty mixture with a lot of flavours. The flavour of the cinnamon, cloves, bay leaves, and almonds added to the rice will occupy all of your senses while cooking. For a weekend meal, serve Modur Pulao with Kashmiri Style Dum Aloo and Phulkas.

KASHMIRI MUJI GAAD

In Kashmir, Gaad means fish, and Gaad Tamatar is a fish recipe cooked with tomato curry. The consistency of this excellent fish curry is normally thick, although it can be changed to suit the individual's preferences. This fish curry, served with simple boiled rice, is not only tasty but also a favourite dish for special occasions. For a weekday Kashmiri lunch or dinner, try Gaad Tamatar with Steamed Rice.





CHAMAN QALIYA

Kashmiri Cuisine's Chaman Qaliya is a creamy cottage cheese curry perfumed with fennel and cardamom. The unusual colour comes from adding saffron and turmeric to the lemon-yellow gravy, which is gently simmered with paneer. The curry is simple to prepare and has a moderate flavour. An aromatic curry cooked in milk and flavoured with Kashmiri spices is a popular vegetarian side dish eaten in the valley on special occasions.

MATSCHGAND

It's one of those unusual delicacies that's well-known in Kashmir's beautiful valleys. Matschgand has its origins in Kashmir. Matschgand is made from minced goat or sheep meat. Meatballs are used in a variety of recipes all around the world. Few people realise, however, that this dish is the Kashmiri response to MeatBall dishes served all across the world. In India, minced meat is always cooked in rich gravy or used to make various Kebabs.

SKYU

This is the traditional dish of Leh but it is loved among the Kashmiri people. Skyu is a dish consisting of wheat flour and water eaten with broth. Skyu Cuisine is a delicious soup made up of a variety of ingredients. It goes well with both meat and veggies. Mutton, as well as harvested dried vegetables, are used to make the soup.

THUKPA

Although not originally from Kashmir, it is extremely popular in the region. Thukpa is a Himalayan noodle soup that is typically served with meat but is particularly tasty when made with lean chicken. In Tibet, Bhutan, Nepal, and parts of India, it is very popular. The word "thuk" means "heart," hence this is a hearty dish. It's commonly cooked using buckwheat noodles in Bhutan. It is best to have this dish with rice noodles in bowls. Enjoy it with a dollop of soup and a sprig of fresh cilantro on top.





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