



Akorn
AKORN DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

INDIA
Travel Information and Map



INDIA

India is one of the most fascinating places on the planet. With a history that dates back 5,000 years in which it has been home to an ancient civilization, a seat of great empires, and a region of historic trade routes, the Indian subcontinent has been coveted for its cultural and material wealth for most of this period. This rich heritage together with an incredibly diverse natural beauty, amazing food and exquisite arts and crafts offers visitors some of the most unforgettable experiences in the world. Everywhere magnificent monuments stand testament to the country's glorious past. Thrilling jungle safaris, quaint hill stations, glistening beaches, and exhilarating mountain treks are just some of the many ways to explore the astounding mix of landscapes and wildlife. The teeming country with a population of over a billion people is also a multi-faith community, buzzing with a mind-boggling array of customs, festivals, and holy shrines. It is the birthplace of some of the world's most revered healing traditions - Ayurveda, Yoga, and Meditation. Then there is contemporary India, one of the fastest-growing economies in the world today, with urban cities replete with the latest technology and luxuries.

Best time to travel: October to March
 Best value time: April to September
 Capital city: New Delhi
 Currency: Indian Rupees
 Time difference: GMT+5 1/2 hours
 Visa: E tourist Visa available for 150 countries



"So vast is India, and so uniquely resilient and deeply rooted are her intertwined social and religious institutions, that all foreign intruders are sooner or later either shaken off or absorbed."
 -William Dalrymple, *White Mughals*

"Indians. I think they're wonderful people. They are highly intelligent people. When provided with opportunities they take them. You can see that in the countries where there are Indian communities of the diaspora. They're not communities that just lie back and wait for things to be done for them. So I think it's Indians, above everything else, that gives one hope"
 -Mark Tully

"If there is one place on the face of earth where all the dreams of living men have found a home from the very earliest days when man began the dream of existence, it is India!"
 -Romain Rolland

"The Indian way of life provides the vision of the natural, real way of life. We veil ourselves with unnatural masks. On the face of India are the tender expressions which carry the mark of the Creators hand."
 -George Bernard Shaw

WEATHER CHART INDIA

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
NORTH INDIA												
Temp°C	21	24	31	36	41	39	36	34	34	34	29	23
Temp°F	70	75	88	97	106	102	97	93	93	93	84	73
Rain (mm)	23	18	13	8	13	74	180	173	117	10	3	10
SOUTH INDIA												
Temp°C	29	31	33	35	38	38	36	35	34	32	29	29
Temp°F	84	88	91	95	101	101	97	95	93	90	84	84
Rain (mm)	36	10	8	15	25	48	91	117	119	305	356	140



CULTURAL SIGHTS

Nowhere is India's spectacular historical and cultural heritage more evident than in its architecture. Majestic palaces, forts, and monuments as well as exquisite temples and mosques are simply everywhere. Undeniably India's most iconic monument is the Taj Mahal, in the city of Agra, built in the 17th century by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal. The capital city of Delhi is studded with architectural gems of its Mughal and colonial past including the Red Fort, Qutub Minar, and Jama Masjid. For the sheer magnificence and the number of palaces and forts that it contains, no state compares to Rajasthan, the Land of the Maharajas. From the enigmatic Buddhist monasteries of Ladakh, Kashmir to the Hindu and Jain Khajuraho Temples in Madhya Pradesh, renowned for its erotic sculptures and the bright, towered Hindu temples of South India, the beauty and array of sights are incomparable.

Popular UNESCO World Heritage Sites

Site	Location
Agra Fort	Agra, Uttar Pradesh
Taj Mahal	Agra, Uttar Pradesh
Fatehpur Sikri	Agra, Uttar Pradesh
Elephanta Caves	Maharashtra
Humayun's Tomb	Delhi
Qutub Minar	Delhi
Red Fort	Delhi
Buddhist Temples, Sanchi	Madhya Pradesh
Khajuraho Temples	Madhya Pradesh

WELLNESS HEALING

The origins of some of the world's most ancient and powerful natural healing systems, Yoga, Meditation, and Ayurveda, lie in ancient India. All three practices espouse principles of harmony between the body, mind, and soul to help lead a healthy and balanced life. Yoga means the union of one's individual consciousness with that of the universe, through physical, spiritual, and mental discipline. There are various forms of Yoga, with Hatha, Ashtanga, and Iyengar among the most popular.



The art of meditation is a practice to train the mind towards self-awareness as well as to clear thoughts. Ayurveda is an ancient medicinal science using herbs and massage therapies not just to treat illnesses but rather to eliminate the root of it. South India is the seat of Ayurveda, but Yoga and Meditation are practiced all over India, in temples, meditation centers, and ashrams. Rishikesh in Uttarakhand is a major Yoga destination as are the many institutes in South India.

ARTS & CRAFTS

The performing arts of India are a mélange of regionally distinct dance forms, music, and theatre. Among the spectacular classical dances are Kathakali, Kuchipudi, and Bharatanatyam. Lively folk dances such as Bhangra and Bihu are regularly performed during harvest festivals. Indian music too is incredibly varied, a mix of religious, classical, folk, and pop. Classical music can be broadly divided into two genres - northern Hindustani and southern Carnatic. India's folk theatre is one of the oldest forms in the world. The repertoire of Indian visual arts is equally exquisite - both in skill and range including painting - wall and miniature, sculpture, pottery, stone and wood carving, metalwork, textile art, and jewelry.



Guests can opt for this exclusive opportunity to witness the grandeur of the royal past when they visit the private sections of City Palace, Jaipur. These sections are where the Royal Family still lives and are not accessible to most tourists. See mirrored glass halls with solid gold work which is 300 years old but still looks newly made. They will also get an opportunity to see Sukh Niwas, which has artworks in silver, miniature paintings as well as priceless photos and other memorabilia of the Royal Family.



WILDLIFE ADVENTURE

The incredibly diverse landscape of India, from snowcapped peaks of the Himalayas to the tropical beaches of Kerala and Goa; the stark desert of Rajasthan to the mangrove swamps of West Bengal, makes it home to some of the richest biodiversity in the world, and a great destination for outdoor adventures. Trekking, hiking, whitewater rafting, kayaking, and caving are some of the most exciting activities for the adventurous. Leh and the Zaskar Valley in Kashmir and Sikkim in the northeast offer some of the country's most panoramic views. Wildlife safaris are the best way to encounter India's magnificent wildlife. Most noted for the iconic Royal Bengal Tiger, the country's other popular species are elephants, lions, rhinos, leopards, and monkeys. It is also abundant in birdlife and flowering plants. Many of these species are endangered, including the Royal Bengal Tiger and Indian rhinoceros, and are protected in reserves, which are the best places to see them. India has over 100 national parks, hundreds of wildlife sanctuaries, and 18 special biosphere reserves.

SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality and devotion form the cornerstone of Indian life. From simple daily rituals practiced at home or the neighborhood temple to joyous, grand festivals, Indians observe a staggering number of religious events. The Indian subcontinent is the birthplace of four of the world's major religions - Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism - while Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam arrived in the 1st millennium AD. Together these faiths have shaped the country's incredibly diverse religious practices as well as some of the most spectacular sacred architecture in the world. Eighty percent of the population practices Hinduism, while Islam is the largest minority religion, followed by Christianity. The country also has a handful of indigenous faiths. Temples and mosques range from simple shrines to magnificent structures, such as the deity-covered multistoried Meenakshi Amman Temple in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, and the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab - holy shrine of Sikhism, or the 17th century Islamic Jama Masjid in Delhi. Equally fascinating are the Buddhist cave

temples and monasteries spread across the country and the beautiful Jain temples of Rajasthan.

FESTIVALS

To witness an Indian festival is truly a sight to behold. The exuberance of Holi, the festival of colors, and the beauty of Diwali, when homes across the country are decorated with oil lamps, create a magical atmosphere. Additionally, events like the Pushkar Camel Fair, unfolding vibrant markets and lively competitions, the Buddhist Hemis Festival of Ladakh, featuring traditional dances and mask performances, or Puri's Rath Yatra, a grand chariot procession, will surely be among the most unforgettable experiences. The Indian festival calendar is a kaleidoscope of celebrations, encompassing national and regional events, religious ceremonies, cultural festivities, traditional rituals, and contemporary gatherings. Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, and Sikh festivals follow the lunar calendar, and Muslim festivals follow the Islamic calendar.

Beyond religious celebrations, India also hosts literature and performing arts festivals that showcase the country's artistic expressions. Jaipur Literature Festival is described as the 'greatest literary show on Earth', a sumptuous feast of ideas, that welcomes millions of people from across India and the globe.



Guests will begin a Yoga session in Mysore learning about its history and importance, and why aficionados flock to the city to learn Ashtanga yoga. They will not only receive personalized attention during a one-on-one session with a yoga instructor but will also learn the 8 limbs (Ashtanga) of yoga, the correct posture, and the synchronized breathing with said postures. Later, they may opt for a guided visit to historical sites where ancient sages once practiced yoga.



FLAVOURS

Indian food is one of the most phenomenal cuisines in the world. Most remarkable is the sheer variety of dishes and cooking techniques, which simply reflect the cultural and regional diversity of the country. Commonly, the spices rule - cumin, coriander, fenugreek, turmeric, cardamom, cloves, cinnamon, ginger, and pepper are just some among the endless list of ingredients. Staple dishes include rice, dal (lentils), curried vegetarian and meat dishes, and breads such as roti and naan. The repertoire of Indian vegetarian dishes is among the tastiest in the world. North Indian food is heavily influenced by its various Muslim invaders from Central Asia and Persia and features hearty meat dishes and the famous tandoori food with its clay-oven grilled meats and vegetables. The flavors of South India are completely distinct including coconut, curry leaves, and mustard seeds. Although largely vegetarian, the southern coastal regions, including Kerala's Malabar coast and Goa, offer spectacular seafood. Fish-based delicacies are a highlight of the eastern states too. The country also has a delectable street food culture. Culinary tours, visits to spice plantations, and tea garden tours (India is one of the largest producers of tea in the world) are great ways to explore this food paradise.

LUXURY HOTELS AND TRAINS

Palatial structures, exquisite décor, outstanding amenities, and service are the hallmarks of Indian luxury hotels. Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru have several ultra-luxury hotels, but Rajasthan stands out for its magnificent heritage palace hotels. Offering an unparalleled view of the Taj Mahal is the Oberoi Amarvilas in Agra. Rambagh Palace and Umaid Bhawan Palace in Rajasthan personify grandeur and offer an experience of living like a Maharaja. Situated in the middle of Lake Pichola in Udaipur is the Lake Palace which speaks volumes of romance and luxury. A wonderful way to experience the legendary sights of India is aboard one of its luxury trains. The Maharajas' Express, offers five pan-India itineraries and is the country's best train excursion. The train provides an unrivaled way of seeing some of the best-known sights in comfort and style. The train excursions include a visit to the famed Taj Mahal, forts & palaces, and ancient



temples. Guests get to witness Hindu traditions and go on a 4x4 safari in search of the elusive Royal Bengal tigers and other wildlife.

MICE-MEETINGS, INCENTIVES, CONFERENCES, AND EXHIBITIONS

A&K takes pride in organizing impeccable MICE events. A highly skilled team of consultants complemented by a superb infrastructure network works towards designing meticulous and creative events tailored to clients' needs. Among the repertoire of services is the specialized Incentives Division. A&K's team recognizes that clients want to experience this enchanting country according to their own budget, pace, and interests and accordingly creates detailed incentive itineraries with in-depth destination consultancy and itemized costing. The incentive-style additions such as special welcome receptions, theme dinners, and team-building activities are all part of the Incentives services from A&K.



Guests get to live the life of a Dabbawala in Mumbai. The session starts with a detailed talk with the head of the Dabbawala association regarding the legendary tiffin service of the city that has been operational over a period of almost 130 years. Guests can also be part of the operations for one day where they participate in the process of distributing dabbas or tiffin on board the busy local trains of Mumbai.



SUGGESTED ITINERARIES

HIGHLIGHTS OF NORTH INDIA

Encapsulating the essence of this rich and diverse land, this journey combines the historical Mughal monuments of Delhi, lavish forts and palaces of Udaipur and Jaipur, and the crowning jewel- the Taj Mahal.

Day 01: Delhi	Day 07: Udaipur
Day 02: Delhi	Day 08: Udaipur
Day 03: Agra	Day 09: Jodhpur
Day 04: Agra	Day 10: Jodhpur
Day 05: Jaipur	Day 11: Delhi
Day 06: Jaipur	

CLASSICAL INDIA

Tour the Indian Golden Triangle. Visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Khajuraho Temples and culminate the tour of ancient living cities in the world and the seat of Hinduism, Varanasi.

Day 01: Delhi	Day 07: Khajuraho
Day 02: Delhi	Day 08: Varanasi
Day 03: Jaipur	Day 09: Varanasi
Day 04: Jaipur	Day 10: Delhi
Day 05: Agra	
Day 06: Agra	

BEST OF WILDLIFE

To spot a Royal Bengal Tiger in the wild is a dream for every wildlife enthusiast. Tour the major National Parks of India along with an experience of two very diverse and historical cities, Delhi, and Mumbai.

Day 01: Delhi	Day 07: Pench
Day 02: Delhi	Day 08: Pench
Day 03: Bandhavgarh	Day 09: Mumbai
Day 04: Bandhavgarh	Day 10: Mumbai
Day 05: Kanha	
Day 06: Kanha	

SOUTHERN SPLENDOUR

This southern sojourn takes you through the exquisite temples of Chennai and Madurai, and wildlife at Periyar and Kumarakom's serene backwaters. End at the colonial city of Kochi.

Day 01: Mahabalipuram	Day 07: Munnar
Day 02: Mahabalipuram	Day 08: Thekkady
Day 03: Pondicherry	Day 09: Backwater
Day 04: Thanjavur	Day 10: Backwater
Day 05: Madurai	Day 11: Kochi
Day 06: Madurai	Day 12: Kochi

COLOURFUL RAJASTHAN

Bestowed upon with cultural heritage, age-old traditions, opulent forts, and palaces speaking volumes of the rich history and vast expanse of the Thar desert, see it all by touring the mystical Rajasthan.

Day 01: Delhi	Day 08: Jodhpur
Day 02: Delhi	Day 09: Udaipur
Day 03: Mandawa	Day 10: Udaipur
Day 04: Bikaner	Day 11: Jaipur
Day 05: Jaisalmer	Day 12: Jaipur
Day 06: Jaisalmer	Day 13: Agra
Day 07: Jodhpur	Day 14: Delhi

JEWELS OF THE NORTH-EAST

From colonial Kolkata with a modern twist to the hills further up, from beautiful Himalayan countryside to the verdant lushness of Kaziranga, explore north-east India's jewels.

Day 01: Kolkata	Day 08: Gangtok
Day 02: Kolkata	Day 09: Gangtok
Day 03: Kolkata	Day 10: Guwahati
Day 04: Darjeeling	Day 11: Kaziranga
Day 05: Darjeeling	Day 12: Kaziranga
Day 06: Pelling	Day 13: Kaziranga
Day 07: Pelling	Day 14: Kolkata

LADAKH - THE LAND OF ENDLESS DISCOVERY

Explore the trans-Himalayan hinterland, its unique culture, and colorful festivals in Ladakh. Explore monasteries, vivid terrains, and a culture that is like no other.

Day 01: New Delhi	Day 06: Nimu
Day 02: New Delhi	Day 07: Nubra
Day 03: New Delhi	Day 08: Nubra
Day 04: Leh	Day 09: Leh
Day 05: Leh	Day 10: New Delhi

KINGDOMS IN THE SKY

Cross the mighty Himalayas of Nepal and Bhutan. UNESCO World Heritage Sites, spot the one-horned In Bhutan, experience the rich history and culture.

Day 01: Delhi	Day 08: Thimphu
Day 02: Kathmandu	Day 09: Punakha
Day 03: Kathmandu	Day 10: Punakha
Day 04: Chitwan	Day 11: Par
Day 05: Chitwan	Day 12: Par
Day 06: Kathmandu	Day 13: Delhi
Day 07: Thimphu	



NEPAL

Nepal is a land of sublime natural beauty, ancient Buddhist monasteries, and Hindu shrines, of smiling sherpas and woolly yaks. The Nepalese Himalayas contain eight of the world's ten highest peaks, including the highest point in the world, Mount Everest, making it easily the mountain lover's delight. Pokhara to the north is the trekker's gateway to the breathtaking Annapurna range and features some of the most beautiful walking trails. Besides trekking, Nepal offers a host of other thrilling adventure sports including rafting, kayaking, and mountain biking. Its cultural heritage is exemplified by Kathmandu, the capital city, as well as the entire Kathmandu valley which has been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site to honor its collection of traditional architecture. It includes - the Durbar Squares of Patan and Bhaktapur, the Buddhist Swayambhunath temple, Bodhnath Stupa, and the Hindu Pashupatinath and Changu Narayan temples. The best places for wildlife viewing in Nepal are Chitwan National Park for tigers and rhinos and the Sagarmatha National Park for yaks, both UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Best time to travel: October to April
 Best value time: May to September
 Capital city: Kathmandu
 Currency: Nepalese Rupee
 Time difference: GMT +5 3/4 hours
 Visa: Valid visa required (Visa could be obtained on arrival)

HIGHLIGHTS

Activity

- Cultural
- Sacred
- Wildlife
- Trekking

Sights

- Durbar Square, Garden of Dreams, Patan Museum, Lumbini, Bhaktapur Sacred Swayambhunath Temple, Bodhnath Stupa, Pashupatinath Temple, Nyatapola Temple
- Chitwan National Park
- Everest Base Camp, Annapurna Circuit Trek, Pokhara



A breakfast like no other awaits guests in one of the highest lodges in the world. At 4,250 meters, visitors will bask in the panoramic Himalayan vistas with the unmistakable pyramid tip of Mt Everest in all its massive glory. Guests can take an early morning helicopter ride from Kathmandu Airport to Lukla. They will fly over the Everest base camp and then onto the lodge where they will partake in the majestic views of Lhotse, Nuptse, Cho-Oyo, AmaDablam, and the spectacular Khumbu valley.



Guests will visit a village in Nepal and take a peek into the daily lives of the locals, possibly the best way to know a region. This exploration will take them to the local government school and the coffee project that supports the teachers' salaries. They can participate in a workshop on butter making, candle making, textile making, etc., and find out the local way of doing this. Later, they will be welcomed by a local family for a meal.

WEATHER CHART NEPAL

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Temp°C	8	9	12	15	17	18	19	19	18	16	12	9
Temp°F	47	48	54	59	63	65	66	66	65	61	54	41
Rain (mm)	15	48	64	99	107	119	130	117	102	53	18	5



BHUTAN

The fabled Buddhist kingdom of Bhutan sits on the eastern edge of the Himalayas, nestled between India and China, it is a land of dramatic Himalayan landscapes and fascinating traditional Buddhist culture. Snow-capped peaks, some over 7,000m, soar over flower-filled alpine valleys allowing for high-altitude trekking as well as beautiful forest strolls. Kula Kangri is the highest peak, followed by Jomolhari. The great geographical and climatic diversity of the country has also contributed to an incredible biodiversity that can be viewed in several national parks. Thimphu, the capital, and the charming city of Paro have numerous Buddhist attractions. Bhutan is a treasure trove of Buddhist architecture typified by dzongs - a distinctive fortress complex that houses monasteries and temples. Punakha dzong and Taktsang dzong are two of the most famous of these. Amazing annual festivals - tsechus and dromchoes - and beautiful textiles and handicrafts breathe life into the other facets of Buddhist art. The Bhutanese are fiercely protective of both their natural and cultural heritage and have remarkably proactive conservation laws.

- Best time to travel: October to April (except Dec & Jan)
- Best value time: May to September
- Capital city: Thimphu
- Currency: Ngultrum
- Time difference: GMT +6 hours
- Visa: Valid visa required (No provision for Visa on arrival)

HIGHLIGHTS

Activity

- Cultural
- Nature
- Dzongs/Monasteries
- Temples

Sights

- Thimphu, Paro
- Upper Paro Valley
- Tashichho, Taktsang, Punakha, Trongsa
- Gomphu Kora



Guests can partake in a variety of traditional Bhutanese art, like Buddhist Mandala painting, and Thangka painting at a renowned arts and crafts school under the guidance of an expert local painter. During the workshop, they can learn not only about the uniqueness of the art but also about its history and how it has been passed down from one generation to the other, from master to student.



If guests would like to enjoy a session on Bhutan's national sport, Archery, they can do so under the guidance of a local expert. Normally bamboo bows are used by the archers to shoot targets with diameters of only 30 centimeters from a distance of 120 meters. Guests may also opt to attend an archery competition. This is a colorful affair with rivalry amongst participating villages being high.

WEATHER CHART BHUTAN

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Temp°C	10	12	16	20	23	24	25	24	23	20	15	11
Temp°F	50	54	61	68	74	75	77	75	74	68	59	52
Rain (mm)	15	41	23	58	122	246	373	345	155	38	8	3



MALDIVES

The Maldives is a tropical island nation home to some of the most stunning beaches, underwater life, and the finest luxury hotels in the world. The country is a chain of 26 atolls, which are a series of coral islands, where every island encircles a lagoon and perfect powder-white beaches. These vast coral reefs and pristine waters contain the most unbelievable marine life including manta rays and the world's largest fish, the whale shark, making the Maldives one of the world's best diving and snorkeling destinations. The entire Baa Atoll in the north has been designated as a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve for its incredible biodiversity. Malé, the capital city, is the bustling heart of the country. The boisterous fish market, shops and restaurants on Majeedhee Magu, the National Museum, and the beautiful 17th century HukuruMiskiyi, or Old Friday Mosque made from coral stone and intricately carved are some of the must-see sights of the city. Maldivian culture includes exceptional craftsmanship that can be seen in lacquer work and stone carvings. For accommodation, the Maldives is almost beyond compare with something for every taste and budget.

- Best time to travel: November to April
- Best value time: May to October
- Capital city: Malé
- Currency: Rufiyaa (MVR)
- Time difference: GMT +5 hours
- Visa: Available on arrival for all nationalities

HIGHLIGHTS

Activity

- Sightseeing
- Diving/Snorkeling
- Water Sports

Sights

- Malé, HaaAlifu Atoll
- Manta Point, Hammerhead Point, Rasdhoo
- Atoll, British Royalty Wreck, Fotteyo, Hanifaru Huraa (Baa Atoll)



Diving and snorkeling are two of the most exciting adventure activities that guests can enjoy, in the Maldives. The crystal-clear waters of the popular dive sites have varied species of aquatic beings and can be explored by beginners and expert-level divers alike. Under the watchful eyes of a certified expert, guests can see colorful pelagic fishes, sea turtles, corals, eels, manta rays, and many other forms of marine life.



Village life on an island in the Maldives is quite interesting. On a visit to one such dwelling, guests can observe locals carrying out their day-to-day activities. Guests can get to know about the local ways of fishing, building fishing boats, and much more.

WEATHER CHART MALDIVES

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Temp°C	30	30	31	32	31	31	30	30	30	30	30	30
Temp°F	86	86	88	90	88	88	86	86	86	86	86	86
Rain (mm)	80	50	80	130	230	180	150	180	250	230	200	230

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