

Come to India to experience its incredible beauty, warmth and colour in springtime!

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City spotlight: Gangtok



FEAST YOUR EYES WITH BEAUTY & YOUR HEART WITH PEACE

Gangtok lies in the Himalayas, in India's northeastern state of Sikkim. The city's traditional Tibetan architecture creates an old-world charm. For those seeking spirituality, Gangtok boasts a large number of ancient monasteries and temples, including the iconic Rumtek Monastery and Enchey Monastery, where you can take part in meditation sessions or witness authentic Tibetan religious ceremonies. Or stroll along the bustling streets of MG Marg, the city's main promenade, where souvenir-filled shops, cosy cafes, and lively street performances offer a delightful experience. Adventure enthusiasts can indulge in thrilling activities such as trekking, river rafting, paragliding, and exploring the rugged terrain.

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Gangtok serves as the gateway to many natural wonders scattered across Sikkim. Take scenic drives to explore beautiful destinations like Tsomgo Lake, Nathula Pass – one of the highest mountain passes in the world, and Yumthang Valley, each offering a glimpse into the region's breathtaking landscapes. The lush greenery of Sikkim's forests, dotted with rhododendrons and orchids, provides an amazing backdrop for leisurely walks and birdwatching excursions. Additionally, discover the state's ethnic communities - the Lepchas, Bhutias, and Nepalis, along with their traditions, languages, and cuisines. Whether enjoying delicious momos and thukpa at local eateries, browsing through markets for fascinating handicrafts, or simply gazing at the mountains, Gangtok will win your heart with its beauty.



TOP 5 EXPERIENCES IN GANGTOK



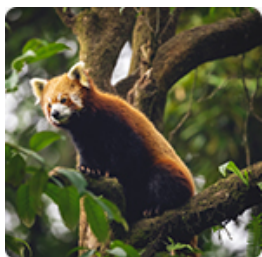
The spellbinding beauty of Tsomgo Lake

Tsomgo Lake lying in the district of Gangtok, open to visitors year-round, is a sight to behold in every season. Tall silver firs and pine trees encircle the glacial lake, which stretches nearly a kilometre in length. As the seasons change, so do the colours of the lake, going from a deep sapphire blue in spring to a stunning inky green as winter approaches. Monsoon mists shroud the lake with a veil and cast an air of mystery. Spring brings with it wildflowers that surround the lake, and birds - from rose finches to golden eagles and migratory wonders like tufted pochards and brahminy ducks fill the air all around with their colours and song, and creatures like musk deer, red pandas, leopards and Himalayan black bears roam the higher ranges.

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Reach for the skies at Rumtek Monastery

Rumtek Monastery lies in the hills about 23 kilometres from Gangtok, a peaceful haven renowned as the home to His Holiness, The Gyalwa Karmapa of the Kargyu sect of Tibetan Buddhism. The journey to Rumtek winds through picturesque Sikkimese villages and paddy farmlands. Surrounded by misty mountains and beautiful terrains, visitors can explore local sights, visit the monastery, or enjoy adventurous activities like rafting and trekking. The Rumtek Monastery, a masterpiece of Tibetan architecture, houses a remarkable collection of Buddhist artifacts. Nearby, the Nehru Botanical Garden offers a variety of plant life and a charming playground. It also has lodging options ranging from cosy lodges to modern resorts. □



Sounds of silence and birdsong in Fambonglho Wildlife Sanctuary

Fambonglho Wildlife Sanctuary is situated just 20 km from Gangtok, spanning over 51 square kilometers, this sanctuary is a haven for nature lovers and wildlife enthusiasts. You can take an exhilarating jungle safari or trek through rich green forests of oak, champa, and mulberry trees, interspersed with cacti, ferns, and bamboo, it is also teeming with a variety of wildlife, including rare Himalayan species like the red panda and the Himalayan black bear, also the civet cat and the musk deer. The sanctuary's trails lead to waterfalls and offer stunning views of the surrounding mountains, making it an unforgettable experience. Fambonglho Wildlife Sanctuary promises to show you the untouched wilderness of Sikkim.



Be enlightened at the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology

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The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology in Gangtok is a repository of scholarly research and cultural preservation. Founded in 1958 by the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, it stands for Tibetan heritage and learning. Housing one of the world's largest collections of Tibetan literature, the institute boasts over 60,000 volumes of invaluable manuscripts, including rare texts dating back centuries, meticulously preserved artifacts, thangka paintings, and sacred religious objects. The institute's research centre is a bustling hive of academic activity, attracting scholars to delve into Tibetan philosophy, linguistics, and religious studies. The institute also hosts regular seminars and workshops, for an exchange of ideas to enrich the global understanding of Tibetan culture and spirituality.



Gangtok is great for MICE incentive groups

With its natural beauty, peaceful ambiance and panoramic landscapes, Gangtok is a refreshing place for corporate events, team-building activities, and incentive trips. The city's well-equipped conference facilities and accommodation for fairly large groups ensure a seamless experience for business travellers, while its choice of adventure sports, cultural attractions, and wellness retreats offer ample opportunities for leisure, relaxation and team bonding activities. Whether it's hosting a conference amidst the eastern Himalayas or bringing employees together in a happy environment and rewarding them with thrilling outdoor adventures, Gangtok's versatility makes it a compelling choice for MICE incentive groups.

[Read more on Gangtok](#)

India Celebrates

March and April herald the arrival of spring with a burst of colour and festivities. The air is filled with the fragrance of flowers and the warmth of the sun. It also brings with it the festival of colours, Holi. Families and friends come together to celebrate this joyful festival across the country, praying for a season filled with rich harvests and renewed bonds of love and friendship.

TOP FESTIVALS TO EXPERIENCE IN MARCH-APRIL



Rann Utsav

Held annually in the white salt desert of the Great Rann of Kutch in Gujarat, it is a festival of culture, art, and tradition. It shows the rich culture and heritage of Gujarat through a kaleidoscope of activities, including folk dances, music performances, camel safaris, and handicrafts. Along with all this and against the backdrop of the glowing white moonlit salt flats, visitors are surrounded with the beauty of the region, while indulging in mouthwatering local cuisine under the starlit sky. It is a unique opportunity to explore the beauty and diversity of Kutch and a deeper appreciation for its people and their way of life.

When and where to celebrate:

01 November – 27 March 2024

The city of Bhuj serves as a gateway to Dhordo village for the Rann Utsav festival. Bhuj has a domestic airport and a railway station. Since it takes only about two

hours to reach the Rann of Kutch from here, you can hire a car or take a bus to the destination.

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International Yoga Festival

International Yoga Festival

It is a celebration of yoga's power to enhance physical and mental well-being. Held annually in the beautiful city of Rishikesh, by the Ganges River in the foothills of the Himalayas, it attracts yoga enthusiasts from around the world. Lasting a week, the festival offers many different workshops, meditation sessions, lectures by spiritual leaders, and cultural performances. Explore various yoga styles, and learn about ancient Indian wisdom and holistic healing practices. With its peaceful setting, the festival serves as a sacred pilgrimage and spiritual retreat for those looking for inner harmony and physical well-being in their lives. □

When and where to celebrate:

15 – 21 March 2024

The best way to reach Rishikesh, the renowned yoga capital, is by air via Dehradun's Jolly Grant Airport (20 km from Rishikesh) or by train to the Rishikesh Railway Station.



The Tulip Festival

The Tulip Festival in Srinagar is held each spring, displaying the magnificence and beauty of over a million tulips. The festival takes place in one of Asia's largest tulip gardens, spread across 30 hectares of land. With meticulously manicured pathways and tulip beds of every colour and hue, a pleasant climate, the Himalayan range and the Dal Lake as the backdrop, it is an experience of a lifetime. This annual festival not only highlights the beauty of Kashmir but contributes significantly to the region's tourism and economic sustainability. It's a happy celebration of nature and welcomes everyone to come and witness the magic of this beautiful paradise on earth.

When and where to celebrate:

19 March – 20 April 2024

The Tulip Festival takes place every year in March-April in Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir. To reach Srinagar, you can fly directly to Srinagar Airport or opt for road travel via the national highway, by car, taxi or bus.

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Holi

The festival of Holi is the most colourful and exuberant celebration of joy in India. With its roots steeped in ancient mythology and folklore, Holi marks different stories of triumph of good over evil and the arrival of the spring season. The streets come alive with an explosion of colours, with an electrifying atmosphere of music, dance, and laughter. From smearing each other with colorful gulal (powder) and water, to enjoying traditional sweet delicacies, every moment is infused with merriment and a sense of friendship among people of different backgrounds. It is a joyful time across India, especially in cities like Jaipur, Mathura, Vrindavan and Varanasi. □

When and where to celebrate:

25 March 2024

Cities like Mathura, Vrindavan, Jaipur, and Delhi offer colorful experiences with traditional rituals and lively celebrations. Holi is celebrated across India, each location presenting a unique perspective of this joyous festival.





Ugadi

Ugadi is a festival celebrated in the southern states of India. Ugadi comes from two words: 'yug' meaning era and 'aadi' meaning beginning. It is believed that Lord Brahma created the universe on this day. It hails the beginning of a new lunar year, and the onset of spring. The festival is observed with various rituals, including the preparation of traditional dishes like Ugadi Pachadi, made with a mix of six ingredients, jaggery, tamarind, neem, mango, chilli and salt that reflect the various emotions of life, such as happiness, disgust, bitterness, surprise, anger and fear respectively. People decorate their homes, wear new clothes, and seek blessings for prosperity and happiness.

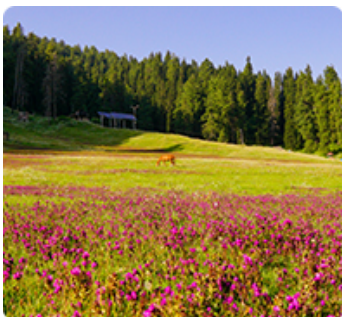
When and where to celebrate:

09 April 2024

Hyderabad in Telangana, Bengaluru in Karnataka, and Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh are the major towns to experience Ugadi celebrations, but you'll find joyous gatherings and a warm sense of community anywhere across these states.

Explore India in March-April

Travelling to India in the spring season, with pleasant weather prevailing across most parts of the country, is an ideal time to journey through this land of rich traditions, culinary delights, and flowering landscapes. As temperatures begin to rise, the country comes alive with a renewed sense of vitality. From the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas to the sun-kissed beaches of Goa, each region offers its own experience.



Gulmarg in spring promises to be unforgettable

Visiting Gulmarg in Jammu and Kashmir during the spring season is like stepping into paradise. As the snow begins to melt, the meadows come alive with a riot of colours, breathtaking against the backdrop of the snow-peaked Himalayas. The crisp mountain air carries the fragrance of blossoming flowers, promising peace and quiet. Take hikes through lush forests, marvel at the scenic beauty from the Gulmarg Gondola, indulge in a round of golf at one of the highest altitude golf courses in the world, try your skills at mountain climbing, or simply unwind in heavenly surroundings. Gulmarg in spring promises an unforgettable experience, breathing crisp mountain air, or teeing off amidst its beauty.



See the Yumthang Valley of Flowers in full bloom

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Visiting the Yumthang Valley of Flowers in Sikkim during the spring season is akin to stepping into a dreamscape. The valley transforms into a medley of colours, with thousands of alpine flowers carpeting the land. Spread over 34 kilometres, against the backdrop of snow-capped peaks and meandering streams, it comes alive with the delicate fragrance of blooming rhododendrons, primulas, iris, poppies, geraniums and other endemic flora, like the special Sikkim Crabapple and strawberries. Yaks and cattle can be seen grazing in the pastures, completing the picture of a perfect countryside. Stroll along the picturesque slopes, breathe in the crisp mountain air, and harmonise with this untouched wonderland. □





Visit and enjoy Wayanad in springtime

Travelling to Wayanad in Kerala during the spring season is a wonderful experience. The weather is pleasant, not too hot or cold, just perfect for outdoor exploring. You can enjoy the lush green hills and forests, and meandering streams. Trekking through the Western Ghats, discovering hidden cascading waterfalls, or relaxing and sipping cups of tea in the rolling green tea estates and spice plantations with their intoxicating aromas are some of the things to experience in the region. With its refreshing atmosphere and stunning scenery, Wayanad in the months of March and April is a great choice for anyone looking to enjoy nature, and even wildlife, in Kerala.

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Travel to Shillong, the jewel of the Northeast

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Discover the beauty of Shillong, Meghalaya, especially in spring, when the days are long with clear skies and cool breezes, and the scenery is at its finest, filled with flowers and lush greenery. Take in the stunning sights of Ward's Lake and trek to Shillong Peak for amazing views. Explore Cherrapunji's living root bridges to witness their famous natural architecture, and the cascading waterfalls of the Elephant Falls. Don't miss the chance to play a game of golf at the natural Shillong golf course, and indulge in its culinary delights, from savoury local dishes like Jadoh (rice and meat), Dohneiiong (pork with black sesame), to sweet treats like Pukhlein (rice cake) and Nakham Bitchi (fermented soybean chutney). □



Visit Dharamshala for peace and adventure in the Himalayas

Dharamshala comes alive in spring with flaming rhododendrons and crisp mountain air. Lying in the lap of the Dhauladhar range, it offers an experience of Tibetan culture in McLeod Ganj, home to the Dalai Lama, and numerous monasteries. Thrill-seekers can soar high above the valleys with exhilarating paragliding adventures, while those looking for peace can find it in meditation and wellness centres scattered throughout the town. Cheer on local, and if you're lucky international, cricket matches at the impressive new cricket stadium, joining in the spirited atmosphere of this beloved sport. Visit ancient Hindu shrines like the Bhagsunath Temple to delve into the region's rich spiritual heritage. Trek through forests to the scenic Triund Hill or simply shop and eat at the many local shops and restaurants.

Beyond Incredible

India is spearheading its journey towards 'Viksit Bharat 2047' with two ambitious campaigns. With global polls and engaging contests, Indians worldwide are urged to become a part of the nation's development mission, while inspiring their foreign friends to explore the wonders of India.



DEKHO APNA DESH | PEOPLE'S CHOICE 2024

07 March – 30 April 2024

Become eligible for a lucky draw and win prizes!

India welcomes everyone to join the tourist destination poll organised by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. Take part by voting for your favourite attractions under five defined categories - spiritual, cultural & heritage, nature & wildlife, adventure, others. Participants need to select at least one attraction that they have already visited and one that they wish to visit. This will help the government of India develop those attractions and destinations in a quick mission mode, contributing to India's roadmap for a 'Viksit Bharat 2047', a completely developed nation by 2047. For more details log on to: <https://innovateindia.mygov.in/dekho-apna-desh/>

JOIN THE 'CHALO INDIA' MOVEMENT

Become an Ambassador of Incredible India and be awarded!

This ambitious campaign to enhance tourism is based on the clarion call given by the Hon'ble Prime Minister asking Indian citizens worldwide to join India in spearheading its journey towards 'Viksit Bharat 2047'. Encourage your friends and family abroad to join the 'Chalo India' movement by getting at least five foreign friends to travel to India. The Government of India has launched the 'Chalo India' initiative to enable the Indian diaspora around the world to become proud Incredible India ambassadors, and win rewards for every friend who travels to India because of you. For more details log on to: <https://www.chaloindia.gov.in/>

#IndiasaysSwagatam

INDIA'S GLOBAL INVITATION TO CHOOSE YOUR FAVOURITE WEDDINGS & HONEYMOONS IN INDIA

Vote under the categories below or under the 'other' category

<https://innovateindia.mygov.in/dekho-apna-desh/>



SPIRITUAL

Vote for your favourite temples, churches, monasteries, gurdwaras, pilgrimage circuits or any other religious sites.



CULTURAL & HERITAGE

Vote for attractions like forts, monuments, statues, palaces, museums, memorials, caves, or any other heritage site or circuits.



NATURE & WILDLIFE

Vote for natural sites like beaches, lakes, waterfalls, rivers, hill stations, national parks, sanctuaries, reserves, zoos, islands.



ADVENTURE

Vote for your favourite sites for trekking, hiking, rafting, snorkeling, kayaking, or any other adventure activity or multi-activity circuits.

Truly Indian

Rural tourism in India offers authentic experiences away from city life. Initiatives such as the 'Swadesh Darshan' Scheme are promoting infrastructure development in rural areas, making them more appealing to domestic and international tourists. Community-based tourism projects empower locals, generating income while also promoting environmental conservation, and contributing to long-term economic sustainability. Plan your next trip to rural India and become a part of its developmental journey.

A MIX OF TRADITIONAL ART, INTRICATE CRAFTSMANSHIP, AND GRAND ARCHITECTURE



Lepakshi

Lepakshi is a village in the Anantpur district of Andhra Pradesh. It is a remarkable place to explore the art and architecture of the ancient Vijayanagara kingdom. It is renowned for the Veerabhadra Temple, adorned with elaborate carvings depicting the Ramayana and monolithic structures. As you walk around the temple complex, you will be transported to a bygone era of artistic prowess and devotion, where every corner tells a story of centuries-old craftsmanship, like hanging pillars and a floating rock.



Beyond its architectural marvels, Lepakshi has a very calming ambiance, surrounded by lush greenery and beautiful landscapes. It has been adjudged the Best Tourism Village 2023 in the silver category. The village is not just a historical treasure, it also boasts of an existent culture of craftsmanship. Visit the village's bustling markets, where skilled artisans display their traditional handicrafts, including intricately woven silk sarees and finely crafted woodwork. The warmth and hospitality of the local people further enriches the experience of your visit with the authentic charm of rural India. □



Things to do:

- **Sightseeing:** Walk through the many famous temples, see the hanging pillars, and the Monolithic Nandi Bull to admire ancient architecture.
- **Explore:** Stroll in the Jatayu Theme Park to get a sense of your historical surroundings. The state government and the people of the village, constructed a huge Bird structure named Jatayu (from Ramayana), reflecting the history of the place.
- **Birdwatching:** Visit the Veerapuram Bird Sanctuary, which is a short distance from the village and famous for the Siberian painted stork that migrates here every year.
- **Souvenir shopping:** Local shops help in economic sustainability by promoting handicrafts, textiles, and agricultural produce by putting them on sale for tourists.
- **Participate:** Attend the Lepakshi Festival, hosted on a grand scale to promote Telugu art, culture and traditions. It has on display traditional crafts, like handloom sarees and dress material, Etikoppaka toys, Kalamkari, Machilipatnam jewellery, wood carvings and wall panels.
- **Cultural show:** Watch traditional dance performances and musical recitals at the Lepakshi Festival.
- **Local activities:** Watch puppet shows, flower shows and other cultural events by local artistes at the amphitheatre built by the state government.

Incredible India!

Quiz on Discover Gangtok

Welcome to our exciting quiz on Gangtok! Test your knowledge about this charming city, from its breathtaking mountain vistas to its cultural heritage.

Get ready to explore and learn more about this enchanting destination through our fun quiz!

- Q1.** What is the capital city of the Indian state of Sikkim?

a. Darjeeling

b. Gangtok

c. Shimla

d. Guwahati
- Q2.** What is the name of the golden meditation structure in Auroville representing the spiritual significance of unity?

a. Himalayas

b. Rocky Mountains

c. Alps

d. Andes
- Q3.** Which famous monastery is located near Gangtok?

a. Tawang Monastery

b. Rumtek Monastery

c. Hemis Monastery

d. Golden Temple
- Q4.** What is the traditional costume of Sikkim?

a. Kimono

b. Saree

c. Bakhu

d. Kilt

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