

In the summer of 2024 come to India to have the best coolcation of your life

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Incredible India  
Calling



Lachung

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# City spotlight: Lachung



## CHILL OUT WITH A REFRESHING ESCAPE TO LACHUNG THIS SUMMER

Lachung lies in the quiet valleys of Sikkim, in the lap of the unspoiled beauty of the Himalayas. Surrounded by snow-covered peaks and thick green forests, it offers the best retreat in the most pleasant environment. Feel the peace in the surroundings of the Yumthang Valley, where meadows burst into a blaze of colours during the summer months. For those searching a spiritual experience, Lachung boasts ancient monasteries such as the Lachung Gompa and many others, where the chants of Buddhist monks echo with the mountain breeze, creating an ambiance of calm and quietude.

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In addition to its natural beauty, Lachung is the place to see some of India's most pristine rhododendron reserves and wildlife sanctuaries. Take a journey to the Khangchendzonga National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where endangered species like the snow leopard and red panda find refuge amidst dense forests and cascading waterfalls. After a day of adventure, rejuvenate your mind and body with traditional Sikkimese wellness therapies, including hot stone baths and herbal massages, offered at local spas and wellness retreats. Relish nature, look into ancient cultures, enjoy holistic wellness experiences, or walk the streets for retail therapy and taste the delicious, sweet and tangy local cuisine. Lachung promises an amazing summer escape!

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## TOP 5 EXPERIENCES IN LACHUNG



### Travel to Lachung Monastery in the summer splendour of Sikkim

Dating back to 1850, the Lachung Monastery offers an experience of Buddhist culture, with traditional architecture, murals and elaborate wood carvings. As you wander through its sacred halls, you'll come upon ancient scriptures, statues, and religious artifacts, each bearing witness to the great wisdom and practices of Buddhism. Learn about the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism through these manuscripts and exquisite Thangka paintings, depicting divine beings and their stories. Join the annual Cham Dance Festival for traditional performances, or partake in the reverence of the Saga Dawa Festival, celebrating the birth, enlightenment and parinirvana of Lord Buddha.

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### Welcome to the summer beauty of Yumthang, the Sikkim Valley of Flowers

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Situated 26 km from Lachung, open from March till October, this enchanting valley paints a pretty picture with gurgling rivers, fuming hot springs, and gentle yaks grazing on green pastures against a backdrop of towering mountains. Start your journey to the Yumthang Valley, also known as the Sikkim Valley of Flowers, through the Shingba Rhododendron Sanctuary, where more than forty species bloom in summer and a vast array of other plants and flowers. The natural beauty of the valley is truly unparalleled in the world.



### The Shingba Rhododendron Sanctuary unveils its true splendour in April & May

It's flowering springtime in Sikkim during the summer months in India, and the Shingba Rhododendron Sanctuary has pleasant weather and freshly blooming rhododendrons all along the Himalayan slopes. It is home to over 40 species of rhododendrons, transforming the rugged rock surfaces into a dreamscape with stunning hues of red, pink, white, and purple. Spanning 43 sq km, you can see the Rhododendron Niveum, also known as the Blood-red Rhododendron, the state flower of Sikkim. In the dense forests with gushing streams, you are also treated to alpine and subalpine flora and fauna, colourful bird species, delicate butterflies, and small animals.



## Capture the untamed beauty of Khangchendzonga National Park in Sikkim

### Capture the untamed beauty of Khangchendzonga National Park in Sikkim

A UNESCO World Heritage Site, with sprawling valleys, crystalline lakes, majestic glaciers, and the natural wonder of caves, all framed by the imposing peak of the world's third highest mountain, Mount Khangchendzonga, which holds spiritual significance for the indigenous people of Sikkim. It is home to snow leopards, Himalayan black bears, Tibetan antelope, wild ass, barking deer, musk deer, flying squirrels, blue sheep, and the red panda who live amongst giant magnolias, rhododendrons, and pine forests. Birdwatchers are in for a treat with rare species such as the Black-necked Crane, Grus Nigricollis, Satyr Tragopan, and Gray Peacock Pheasant. The best time to visit is between March and May. □



### Escape to Lachung for wellness and vitality in the lap of the Himalayas

Lachung, with its cool pure mountain air and breathtaking natural beauty, offers a quiet escape from the chaos of everyday life, inviting you to rejuvenate your mind, body, and spirit. Immerse yourself in ancient Sikkimese wellness practices, including hot stone baths and herbal massages, offered at local spas and wellness retreats. Surrounded by mountains and forests, Lachung is perfect for yoga and meditation sessions, allowing you to find inner peace amidst the Himalayan landscape. Indulge in holistic therapies, practice mindfulness in nature, or simply take in the serenity of the mountains, for the best rejuvenating wellness experience.

[Read more on Lachung](#)

# India Celebrates

In April and May, India celebrates Baisakhi in Punjab with lively bhangra dances and colourful festivities; Vishu in Kerala, and Tamil New Year in Tamil Nadu with elaborate rituals and feasts. Additionally, Ram Navami in Ayodhya and festivals like Navratri, Ganga Saptami and Buddha Purnima are observed nationwide, offering a diverse experience for visitors.

## TOP FESTIVALS TO EXPERIENCE IN APRIL-MAY



### Eid ul-Fitr

Celebrated by Muslims worldwide, Eid ul-Fitr marks the end of Ramadan, the holy month of fasting, a period of self-control over worldly desires and spiritual reflection. Families gather to offer prayers, exchange warm greetings, and indulge in festive feasts. The day starts with a special prayer at mosques, and charitable acts such as giving alms to the less fortunate. Delightful delicacies are prepared, and gifts are exchanged among loved ones. The celebrations encapsulate the essence of community, generosity, faith, and unity.

#### When and where to celebrate:

11 April 2024

Experience it in Delhi at the Jama Masjid and Chandni Chowk, where one can also enjoy traditional delicacies. In Hyderabad, the Charminar area and Mecca Masjid come alive with markets and prayers. Lucknow offers festivities at the Bara Imambara and Aminabad markets.



## Baisakhi Baisakhi

Baisakhi is celebrated to mark the Sikh and Punjabi New Year in Punjab and Haryana, with dholak beats and bhangra dances, to the holy gurdwaras, where devotees gather to offer prayers. It is observed as New Year in different parts of the country under different names; Bohag Bihu in Assam, Puthandu in Tamilnadu, Vishu in Kerala, Vaisakha in Bihar, Poila Baisakh in Bengal, Ugadi in Andhra Pradesh, and Gudi Padwa in Maharashtra. Communities offer gratitude and enjoy rituals, music and dance performances, with culinary traditional delicacies at fairs and markets.

### When and where to celebrate:

13 April 2024

Experience Baisakhi celebrations in Amritsar's Golden Temple, or explore the rural charm of Punjab's villages, or join in the festivities in Delhi's bustling markets. The Indian month of Vaisakha (generally 13-15 April) promises an unforgettable experience across the country.



## Ram Navami

Ram Navami is celebrated on Lord Ram's birthday, who is believed to be the seventh of the ten avatars of Lord Vishnu, and is known as Maryada Purshotam (an ideal man). Homes and temples are beautifully decorated, and people gather to offer prayers and sing devotional bhajans (hymns). In his birthplace, Ayodhya, colourful floats are taken out depicting scenes from his life. Temples across the country resonate with bhajans (hymns) and prayers. Navratri is also celebrated on this day after a 9-day fast dedicated to the nine forms of Maa Shakti. Ram was chosen to be born on this auspicious day.

### When and where to celebrate:

17 April 2024

Ram Navami is celebrated across India, but the best place to be is Ayodhya, the birthplace of Lord Ram. The city's historic Ram Janmabhoomi temple complex hosts elaborate prayers and religious rituals. People gather here from all across the country.



## Mahavir Jayanti Mahavir Jayanti

Mahavir Jayanti commemorates the birth of the 24th and the last Tirthankara, Lord Mahavir. Across the country, Jain temples and shrines are beautifully decorated, with devotees coming out with religious chants and music. Visitors can watch the rituals and learn about Jainism's teachings in places like Varanasi, Mount Abu's Dilwara Temples, and Palitana's temple complex of 3000 temples in Bhavnagar. Lord Mahavir preached ahimsa (non-violence), satya (truth), asteya (non-stealing), brahmacharya (chastity) and aparigraha (non attachment). Mahavir Jayanti offers travellers a journey into India's diverse cultural heritage. □

### When and where to celebrate:

21 April 2024

For lively celebrations visit Varanasi. For a serene experience, Palitana's temple complex in Gujarat, while the Dilwara temples in Mount Abu resound with devout chants. It is also celebrated in Shraavanabelagola and Kolkata's Jain temples.





## Buddha Purnima

Buddha Purnima, celebrates the birth, enlightenment, and attainment of Nirvana of Lord Buddha. Observed on the full moon day of the fourth month of the calendar, this auspicious occasion brings people together to artistically decorated temples and monasteries. Participate in rituals symbolising purity and new beginnings by pouring water on the statue of Buddha, while spending the day in prayer and reflection. Buddha Purnima offers a great opportunity to learn about the rich cultural heritage of India, while listening to teachings from Buddhist scriptures on peace, compassion, and enlightenment propagated by Lord Buddha.

### When and where to celebrate:

23 May 2024

Bodhi Gaya, the birthplace of Buddhism and the site of Buddha's enlightenment, is a must-visit destination. Sarnath, where Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon, comes alive with festivities. Dharamshala, a hub of Tibetan Buddhism, and Ladakh's monasteries present special events.

# Explore India in April-May

Travelling in the mountains of India during April and May offers a refreshing escape from the summer heat in the rest of the country. With melting snows and cool weather, this time of the year comes alive with lush greenery, blooming flowers, and gushing rivers, creating a beautiful and a very pleasant environment. Trek through the Himalayan trails, explore quaint hill stations, indulge in adventure activities or simply soak in the tranquility, the summer months provide an ideal opportunity to experience India's mountainous regions.



## Tawang is a summer sanctuary of lakes, mountains, valleys and culture

Tawang, in the northeastern state of Arunachal Pradesh, is a captivating summer destination during April and May. Renowned for its awe-inspiring Tawang monastery - which is the largest in India, its pristine lakes reflecting snow-capped peaks, Tawang offers a beautiful cool summer retreat. You can enjoy fun-filled adventure activities like paragliding, river rafting, rock climbing, rappelling, and trekking, while admiring the gorgeous landscapes covered with multi-coloured rhododendrons, explore and trek amidst the high mountains, or simply bask in the rejuvenating quietude of nature, and have an unforgettable summer experience.

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## Discover the scenic summer charm of the Himalayas in Patnitop

## Discover the scenic summer charm of the Himalayas in Patnitop

Patnitop is a hill resort and a summer sanctuary in the heart of Jammu & Kashmir, close to the Pir Panjal range, 47 km from Udhampur and 112 km from Jammu. Perched on a beautiful plateau at an altitude of 2024 metres, it lies along the Jammu-Srinagar highway offering breathtaking views and an escape from the summer heat. This charming town provides opportunities for trekking on its many scenic trails or picnicking by the meandering streams. Nearby towns such as Kud, renowned for fresh patissa (a sweet delicacy), □ and Batote, known for its quality rajma (kidney beans), add to the culinary delights of the region. □





## Enjoy the warmth of the sun in Munsiyari this summer

This quaint little town, enveloped by towering Himalayan peaks, offers a miraculous spectacle of the sun rising and setting behind the jagged summits of the snow-clad ranges of Pithoragarh. Munsiyari's charm lies in its expansive vistas, with the sun-kissed Panchachuli peaks painting a stunning backdrop. It is the beginning point of trekking expeditions to the Ralam and Milam Glaciers and the legendary Nanda Devi Peak. Munsiyari, in Uttarakhand, serves as the base camp for expeditions to the Nanda Devi Peak, and for trails like the Khaliya top trek. It is definitely a great summer getaway, offering a perfect blend of adventure and natural beauty.

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## Fun in Dalhousie in summer with nature, leisure, and adventure

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Dalhousie is a popular summer destination in Himachal Pradesh, with its forested hills, colonial architecture, and panoramic views of snow-capped mountains. You can visit the old charming churches, take nature walks amidst the cedar and pine forests, or leisurely stroll along the Mall Road that has quaint cafes, good restaurants, bustling markets, and cosy art galleries. The pleasant weather during this time makes it ideal for outdoor activities like nature walks, birdwatching, horseback riding, trekking to nearby viewpoints, picnicking on the meadows, and enjoying boat rides on Khajjiar Lake. Whether you're indulging in an activity or simply unwinding amidst nature, Dalhousie is a delightful summer getaway. □



## Travel to Badrinath for a soul-stirring experience

Badrinath lies in Uttarakhand along the Alaknanda river and is revered as one of the Char Dham pilgrimage sites. It becomes accessible in summer as the snow melts, allowing visitors to journey to the revered Badrinath Temple, dedicated to Lord Vishnu and believed to have been established by Adi Shankaracharya in the 9th century. The adventurous can explore nearby attractions like the stunning Mana Village - considered to be the last inhabited village before the Indo-Tibetan border, Vasudhara Falls that come down from a height of 400 ft, and the mystical Valley of Flowers. With its divine ambiance and opportunities for adventure, Badrinath is a great summer destination for both spiritual pilgrimage and adventure.

# Beyond Incredible



## ENJOY COOLCATIONS IN INDIA'S BEAUTIFUL HILLSTATIONS THIS SUMMER

Shake off traditional perceptions about the hot summers in India and travel to the country's beautiful hill destinations for a cool respite, away from the summer heat. With our initiative, 'Coolcations', we want to shatter the misconception that summer in India is synonymous only with sweltering discomfort. International travellers, while planning their holidays will discover a wealth of places and different experiences awaiting them year-round. From attractive hill stations to tranquil coastal retreats, India offers a plethora of options to curate the perfect vacation, assuaging the wanderlust as a delightful 365-day destination.

India invites travellers in the summer months, boasting a multitude of enchanting hill stations scattered across the country. From the green hills of Shimla and the picturesque charm of Darjeeling to the quiet beauty of Munnar and the adventurous trails of Manali, all of which offer a refreshing escape from the summer heat of the plains. Each hillstation has its own unique charm and shopping delights. Wander through the markets of Ooty, renowned for aromatic spices and handmade chocolates, or the bustling bazaars of Nainital, where you can find exquisite woolens and intricate wooden handicrafts. Discover the quaint charm of Kodaikanal, famous for its handloom textiles and handmade soaps, or shop for locally produced honey, coffee, and traditional Kodava jewellery in Coorg. You can go on gondola rides, exhilarating treks, paragliding, river rafting, bungee jumping, ziplining, mountain climbing, boatrides or immerse yourself in local traditions and cuisine. Whatever you plan to do, the hill towns in India will charm you enough to bring you back for more next summer.

#IndiasaysSwagatam

## ENJOY THE COOL BREEZES & SUMMER ADVENTURES IN INDIA'S ENCHANTING HILL TOWNS ENJOY THE COOL BREEZES & SUMMER ADVENTURES IN INDIA'S ENCHANTING HILL TOWNS



### SHIMLA

Lying in the Himalayas, Shimla is ideal for summer holidays with adventure activities like trekking, paragliding and ice skating or just relaxing with great restaurants and cafes.



### MUNNAR

Replete with green valleys and a vast variety of flora and fauna, Munnar, in the Western Ghats, offers a respite from the summer heat with cloudy skies, pleasant weather and delectable cuisine.



### NAINITAL

The vast mango-shaped Naini Lake is the main attraction of Nainital in the foothills of the Himalayas. Take a boatride to see the mist-shrouded lake echo with calls of many birds.



### UDHAGAMANDALAM (OOTY)

Clear blue skies, lush green hills in the Nilgiris, coffee and tea plantations, forests of eucalyptus, conifers and pines, and pleasant weather make Ooty the perfect summer getaway.

# Truly Indian

Rural tourism in India has emerged as a vital component of sustainable development, offering travellers an authentic experience while simultaneously uplifting rural communities. With its rich cultural heritage and traditions, rural India presents a unique opportunity for tourists to engage with local communities, explore indigenous crafts, and immerse themselves in traditional lifestyles. Recognising its potential to generate employment, preserve cultural heritage, and alleviate poverty, the Government of India has prioritised rural tourism as a key sector for socio-economic development.

## SIP A HOT CUP OF TEA ON THE INDO-TIBET BORDER IN THE COOL CLIMES OF THE FIRST VILLAGE IN INDIA

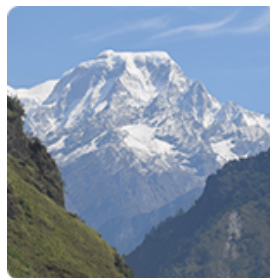


### Mana

Mana is a small village located in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand, just 3 km from Badrinath town. It's been designated as a 'Tourism Village' by the state government. People living there are called Bhotias, who live in small cottages that are gracefully decorated and carved. Visitors can enjoy the local culture by interacting with them, joining in their farming activities, and sampling authentic Himalayan cuisine, offering a glimpse into the unique lifestyle of this remote mountain community. Mana is a sacred place for the Hindus because of its links to the Mahabharata. It is believed that the Pandavas passed through the village on their way to heaven. There's a famous stone bridge, Bheem Pul, believed to be created by Bheem (one of the brothers), a huge rock formation across the River Saraswati.

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With its scenic trails and proximity to well known Himalayan attractions, Mana is a paradise for trekkers. The natural surroundings also provide an ideal habitat for many avian species, making it a haven for birdwatchers. It is famous for hand-made woolen garments and materials made of sheep wool, like shawls, caps, mufflers, pankhis (A thin blanket) and many other things. Homestays are available that offer a great experience to understand their rustic, yet charming lifestyle and traditions. □



### Things to do:

#### ► Sightseeing:

- Bheem Pul** is a bridge of mythological importance that spans the Saraswati River. Believed to be built by Bheem, to help Draupadi cross the river.
- Vasudhara Falls** cascade gracefully, as a conduit of divine blessings and rejuvenation. The Pandavas are believed to have rested here during exile.
- Vyas Caves** is said to be the place where Rishi Ved Vyas lived and composed the Mahabharata. It is a small shrine dedicated to him.

#### ► Explore:

- Valley of Flowers**, open from May-October, boasts an unimaginable variety of multicoloured blossoms set against towering mountains.
- Tapt Kund Badrinath** are beautiful hot springs, believed to have been the abode of Lord Agni and have medicinal properties to cure skin diseases.



c. **Nanda Devi National Park** has exceptionally rich biodiversity, and many threatened species like the snow leopard and the Himalayan musk deer.

► **Temple visits:**

a. **Mata Murti Temple** is dedicated to the mother of Lord Narayan (Vishnu), who took birth as her son as Nar and Narayan.

b. **Ganesha Cave** lies in lush green surroundings and is revered because Lord Ganesha is said to have written the Mahabharata here.

c. **Hemkund Sahib** is a highly revered pilgrimage site for the Sikh community who believe Guru Gobind Singh spent 10 years in meditation here.

d. **Badrinath Temple** is only three kilometres from Mana.

► **Trek** to the towering peaks of Nilkantha, Mana Parvat, and Mount Kamet through high mountain passes like Mana Pass and Saraswati Col.

► **Walk** and marvel at the origin of the Saraswati River as it flows into the Alaknanda River to form the Keshav Prayag.

► **Birdwatching** You can walk in the village or in the parks closeby for an amazing birdwatching experience.

► **Shopping** is a delightful experience in Mana with quaint shops offering many local handicrafts, including woolen items made from sheep's wool.

# Incredible India!

## Quiz on Discover Lachung

Welcome to the Lachung Quiz! Test your knowledge about the enchanting attractions of Lachung. Explore its ancient monasteries, vast valleys, reserves and sanctuaries as you answer the questions.

Choose the correct option and discover more about this captivating destination!

**Q1.** Which famous attraction in Lachung offers a serene escape amidst snow-capped mountains and lush greenery?

- |                                   |                                  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. Lachung Monastery              | b. Yumthang Valley               |
| c. Shingba Rhododendron Sanctuary | d. Khangchendzonga National Park |

**Q2.** Where can visitors see the best multicoloured Rhododendrons in Lachung?

- |                                   |                                  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. Lachung Monastery              | b. Yumthang Valley               |
| c. Shingba Rhododendron Sanctuary | d. Khangchendzonga National Park |

**Q3.** Which destination in Lachung is known for its spiritual significance and Tibetan Buddhist architecture?

- |                                   |                                  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. Lachung Monastery              | b. Yumthang Valley               |
| c. Shingba Rhododendron Sanctuary | d. Khangchendzonga National Park |

**Q4.** Which sanctuary in Lachung is home to a variety of wildlife including the elusive snow leopard?

- |                                   |                                  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. Lachung Monastery              | b. Yumthang Valley               |
| c. Shingba Rhododendron Sanctuary | d. Khangchendzonga National Park |

Mail your answers to us at [incredible-india@gov.in](mailto:incredible-india@gov.in) with your Name, Age, Country for a chance to win prizes.

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