

Incredible India Calling



Udaipur

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City spotlight: Udaipur



UDAIPUR REFLECTS ITS BEAUTY IN ITS LAKES AND YOUR HEARTS

Udaipur, referred to as the 'City of Lakes', lies in the Indian state of Rajasthan and enchants with its rare beauty and regal charm. Surrounded by Lake Pichola and framed by the Aravalli hills, it is a destination for those who enjoy natural beauty and history. The City Palace, built nearly 400 years ago by the rulers of the Mewar Dynasty, stands majestically along the lake, an exquisite fusion of Rajasthani and Mughal architecture. Wander through its grand halls, courtyards, and intricately carved balconies to see the splendor of a bygone era. The nearby Jag Mandir and Jag Niwas (Lake Palace), both situated on islands in Lake Pichola, add to Udaipur's sublime allure. The Lake Palace, now a luxury hotel, was once the royal retreat and its marble architecture seems to float on the water, making it perfect for romantic getaways and luxury vacations.

Beyond its architectural marvels, Udaipur's rich culture offers bustling markets, such as Hathi Pol Bazaar and Bada Bazaar, brimming with colourful textiles, traditional crafts, and intricate jewellery. Enjoy the flavours of Rajasthani cuisine, with local delicacies like dal baati churma, gatte ki sabzi, and the delectable sweet, ghevar. The city's numerous festivals, including the Mewar Festival, Shilpgram Utsav, and the Bagore ki Haveli museum provide a glimpse into local culture, music, and dance. As the sun sets and twilight descends, enjoy a fairy-tale boat ride on Lake Pichola, with the shimmering reflections of palaces and temples, offering a tranquil end to a beautiful day. There is so much to



see in Udaipur that you will come back again and again for more.

TOP 6 EXPERIENCES IN UDAIPUR



— Visit the graceful 5-storey Jagdish Temple in Udaipur dedicated to Lord Vishnu

An exquisite example of Indo-Aryan architecture, the Jagdish Temple is one of Udaipur's most iconic landmarks. Constructed in 1651 by Maharana Jagat Singh I, this grand temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu and is renowned for its intricate carvings, which depict various deities like Shiva, Ganesha, Goddess Shakti and the Sun God, with mythological scenes, and detailed floral patterns. Its towering spire, or shikhara, rises high above the city. The temple's five-storey structure features a central sanctum that houses a black stone idol of Lord Vishnu, depicted as Lord Jagannath. The temple's ornate pillars and detailed sculptures offer a glorious glimpse into the architectural and spiritual heritage of Rajasthan.

— Get stunning panoramic views of Udaipur from Sajjangarh, Monsoon Palace

Sajjangarh, also known as the Monsoon Palace, stands on a hilltop overlooking Lake Pichola with breathtaking panoramic views. Built in the late 19th century by Maharana Sajjan Singh, the palace was designed as a retreat to observe the monsoon clouds over Udaipur. Its grand white marble façade and intricately carved balconies, reflect the opulence of the Rajput era. The palace provides stunning views of the Aravalli hills and nearby lakes, including Lake Badi and Lake Fateh Sagar. The palace's location and design are also said to be influenced by astronomical considerations, adding a layer of historical intrigue to its charm.

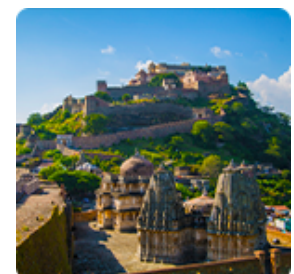


— Find Rajput architecture and artefacts at Bagore Ki Haveli and its museum

Bagore Ki Haveli, a historic mansion overlooking Lake Pichola, was built in the 18th century by the Prime Minister of Mewar, during the reign of Maharana Shakti Singh. It has stunning murals, elaborate mirror work, and ornate jharokhas (balconies). The haveli has been meticulously restored and now houses an elaborate museum with a vast collection of artefacts, including traditional costumes, antique furniture, and royal regalia, offering an insight into the artistic Rajasthan. Walk through its richly decorated rooms, courtyards, and balconies, and enjoy traditional music performances and folk 'Chari' and 'Ghoomar' dances that provide an experience of local performing arts.

— A majestic blend of wildlife and history at Kumbhalgarh Sanctuary and Fort

Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary and the Kumbhalgarh Fort are located near Udaipur. The sanctuary, sprawling over 578 square kilometers, has a diverse range of wildlife, including leopards, wolves, and various deer species. Its rugged terrain and lush vegetation create the perfect backdrop for wildlife safaris. The Kumbhalgarh Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, stands overlooking the sanctuary. Built in the 15th century by Maharana Kumbha, it is renowned for its



imposing walls, stretching over 36 kilometers, considered the second-longest continuous wall in the world after the Great Wall of China.



Elevate your wedding ceremony with a royal experience in Udaipur

Discover the enchanting charm of Udaipur, the city of lakes, where graceful elegance meets modern luxury for your dream wedding. Its quiet picturesque beauty and palatial heritage offer a romantic backdrop that promises to make your special day unforgettable. Imagine exchanging vows against the grand setting of historic forts, opulent palaces, and shimmering lakes, feeling like royalty as you tie the knot in style. Complemented by world-class hospitality and bespoke services, the enchanting atmosphere and exquisite venues of Udaipur will weave the perfect story for your wedding celebration.

Walk through the colourful world of Rajasthan's handicrafts in Shilpagram

Visit Shilpagram, a village near Udaipur, for a journey into the heart of Rajasthan's rich handicraft heritage. It is a celebration of traditional arts and crafts, where over 400 artisans exhibit their amazing skills in weaving, pottery, and painting. As you stroll through the rustic lanes, you'll find bandhani (tie-dye) textiles, elegant blue pottery, detailed wood carvings, and beautiful puppets amongst so much more, all reflecting the region's artistic traditions. Shilpagram also offers an opportunity to interact with the artisans themselves, for an insight into their techniques and stories, and the atmosphere is enhanced by folk performances and local food delicacies.



[Read more on the lake city of Udaipur](#)

India Celebrates

Festivals are celebrated with deep reverence, reflecting India's rich cultural and spiritual traditions.

Families come together to perform rituals and offer prayers, seeking blessings for prosperity and happiness. Homes are decorated with lamps, rangoli, and flowers, creating an atmosphere of joy and devotion. Traditional meals are prepared with dishes that have been passed down generations. The spirituality, love, and cultural practices makes Indian festivals deeply meaningful occasions.

TOP FESTIVALS TO EXPERIENCE IN SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER



Onam

Onam is a harvest festival celebrated mainly in Kerala, commemorating the Vamana avatar of Vishnu, and the homecoming of the legendary emperor Mahabali. The ten-day festival reveals the rich culture through various traditional activities. Homes are decorated with beautiful pookalam (floral rangolis), and families come together to prepare and share the Onam Sadhya, a feast of over 25 dishes. The festivities include snake boat races (Vallam Kali), the tiger dance (Pulikali), folk music and dance performances like Kathakali and Thiruvathira, along with games and competitions like tug o' war and martial arts (Onathallu).

When and where to celebrate:

06 - 15 September 2024

Onam is celebrated by Malayali people in Kerala and around the world. The main day of the festival, Thiruvonam, is the culmination of the ten-day festivities. It is also observed in other parts of India where Malayali communities reside, including Bengaluru, Chennai, Mumbai, and Delhi.

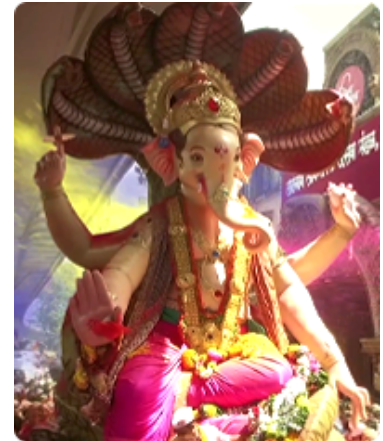
Ganesh Chaturthi & Visarjan

Ganesh Chaturthi is a festival that celebrates the birth of Lord Ganesh, the god of wisdom and prosperity. Marked by elaborate rituals and festivities, it begins with the installation of beautifully crafted clay idols of Ganesh in homes and public pandals. Prayers are offered with hymns and aarti seeking the deity's blessings. The festival's highlight is the visarjan (immersion) ceremony, where idols are carried in processions accompanied by music and dance, to return the deity to his celestial abode, by immersing the idol in the sea, rivers, lakes, or now in specially created water bodies for environmental sustainability.

When and where to celebrate:

07-17 September 2024

Ganesh Chaturthi is celebrated across India, but it is particularly grand in Maharashtra, especially Mumbai and Pune. In all other states, the festival is also observed with enthusiasm, with each region adding its unique local traditions.



Vishwakarma Puja

Vishwakarma Puja is dedicated to Lord Vishwakarma, the divine architect and craftsman of the gods, who is revered for his exceptional skills. This festival is celebrated by artisans, craftsmen, engineers, and workers in various industries. On this day, workshops, factories, and workplaces are cleaned and decorated, and tools, machinery, and instruments are worshipped as a mark of respect and gratitude. Rituals include offering of flowers, sweets, and prayers, seeking blessings for safety, success, and prosperity. The day is also marked in a spirit of unity and appreciation for the men and women and their craftsmanship and labour that builds the foundation of society.

When and where to celebrate:

17 September 2024

The festival is celebrated across India, but is especially prominent in the industrial belts of Delhi NCR, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh. It is also celebrated with fervour in various parts of Assam, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh.

Ziro Festival of Music

The Ziro Festival is a celebration of music, culture, and art set amidst Arunachal Pradesh's beautiful Ziro Valley. This four-day festival is an eclectic mix of independent music from across India and the world. The festival is renowned for its diverse musical lineup, with genres ranging from indie pop and rock to folk and electronic. Beyond the music, the festival offers a rich cultural experience with local Apatani tribal traditions, their warm hospitality, cuisine, and crafts, creating a fabulous atmosphere. With its stunning natural backdrop and artistic expressions, the Ziro Festival of Music is a must-visit for anyone with a soul for music and beauty.

When and where to celebrate:

26 – 29 September 2024

The Ziro valley, located in the Lower Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh, is the perfect setting for the Ziro Festival of Music, with its pleasant weather and lush green landscape. It draws both domestic and international attendees.



Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur, also known as the Day of Atonement, is the holiest day for the Jewish community. It is a day dedicated to repentance, prayer, and fasting, seeking forgiveness and atonement for their sins and wrongdoings. The day begins with Kol Nidre, a prayer chanted at the onset of the day, and continues with a 25-hour fast, during which no food or drink is consumed. The day is marked by intense prayers held in synagogues. Yom Kippur concludes with the Ne'ilah service, and the sounding of the shofar (ram's horn), symbolising a spiritual cleansing and renewal for the coming year.

When and where to celebrate:

11 -12 October 2024

Yom Kippur is observed by the Jewish communities mainly in cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Cochin, and Pune, where synagogues hold special services for the occasion.

Explore India in September-October

Visiting India in September and October offers the ideal opportunity to explore its low-lying areas, their landscapes, cultures, and gastronomic delights. The transition from the monsoon season to cooler temperatures, makes it ideal for outdoor activities. Cities and towns come alive with festivities, bustling markets and shopping centres, perfect for experiencing local culture, visiting all the historical wonders and relishing their diverse local cuisines.



Explore the City of Dreams and stroll along Mumbai's Marine Drive

Visiting Mumbai after the monsoons is wonderful with pleasant weather and many cultural festivities. The city comes alive with the celebration of Ganesh Chaturthi, with grand processions and decorated pandals on every street. Enjoy the magical experience of walking along Marine Drive with the cool sea breeze, visit the historic Gateway of India, explore the nearby bustling markets of Colaba, and the art centres at the Fountain Square. Mumbai's culinary scene is equally diverse, with street food delights and fine dining go hand in hand. The city's beaches, such as Juhu and Chowpatty, provide perfect spots to relax, and enjoy the sunset with vada pav and bhel puri, sold by local vendors.

Embrace innovation and nature in Bengaluru, India's Silicon Valley

Bengaluru, known as the 'Silicon Valley of India', offers a perfect blend of modernity and tradition. The weather is cool and pleasant at this time, ideal for exploring its lush gardens, such as Lalbagh and Cubbon Park. Visitors can enjoy the city's vibrant nightlife and culinary delights, ranging from traditional South Indian dishes to international cuisine. Bengaluru is also home to historical landmarks like the Bangalore Palace and Tipu Sultan's Summer Palace. The tech-savvy city, with its numerous cafes and shopping districts, offers a dynamic yet relaxed atmosphere.



Visit India's cultural treasure and enjoy Durga Puja in Kolkata like never before

Kolkata in September and October is a sight to behold, especially during Durga Puja, the city's most significant festival. The streets are exquisitely decorated with colourful pandals and idols, creating a festive and welcoming atmosphere. Visitors can explore colonial architecture, such as the Victoria Memorial and Howrah Bridge amongst many others, and stroll through the bustling markets of New Market and College Street. The city's rich literary and cultural heritage is palpable in its numerous museums and art galleries. Kolkata's cuisine, its fish curries and original kati rolls, along with its sweets like rasgulla and sandesh, offer a delectable experience.

Enjoy the coastal charm and enduring traditions of Chennai

Chennai, with its seaside charm, is delightful to visit at this time of the year as the city experiences mild pleasant weather. The iconic Marina Beach offers a perfect setting for a leisurely walk and a lot of intermingling with local people. Historical landmarks like Fort St. George and the Kapaleeshwarar Temple are beautiful examples of Chennai's rich heritage.

The city is also known for its classical music and dance forms, with performances often held during this time. There is traditional Tamil cuisine to savour, including dosa, idli, and filter coffee. Chennai's huge busy markets and shopping centres add to the city's appeal.



Get blessings at the Golden Temple and relish Amritsar's finger-smacking cuisine

Amritsar is spiritually uplifting. The Golden Temple, with its shimmering reflection in the holy water tank, is the highlight, offering peace and tranquillity and welcoming all devotees and curious visitors alike. The Jallianwala Bagh memorial and the Partition Museum provide deep insights into the history of British rule and India's independence struggle. Food lovers will relish the local Punjabi cuisine, particularly the Amritsari kulcha chhola, fish fry, and lassi. The Wagah Border ceremony, a short drive from the city, offers a patriotic spectacle of the evening retreat ceremony between India and Pakistan.

Beyond Incredible



CELEBRATE INDIA IN ITS FESTIVE SEASON

Visiting India from September onwards for a truly enchanting experience, as the weather turns pleasant everywhere and the festive season starts, when the joy of devotion and the exuberance of togetherness becomes intoxicating. Starting with Ganesh Chaturthi, the air is filled with a sense of spiritual fervour in Mumbai and Pune, as beautifully crafted idols of Lord Ganesha are created, worshipped and later immersed in water bodies. Following closely is Navratri, celebrated with enthusiasm across the country, particularly in Gujarat, where people participate in the energetic Garba and Dandiya Raas dances. The nine nights of Navratri culminate in Dussehra, symbolising the victory of good over evil, marked by the burning of

effigies of Ravana, and grand theatrical performances of the Ramayana.

As October and November approach, the festive spirit in India reaches its zenith with Diwali, the festival of lights. Homes and streets are decorated with twinkling fairy lights, colourful rangoli, and the joy of buying new clothes and preparations for sweets and lavish feasts. Families come together to perform Lakshmi Puja, exchange gifts, and enjoy time together, celebrating the triumph of light over darkness. In Kerala, the harvest festival of Onam brings a different kind of vibrancy, with the elaborately decorated Pookalam, traditional boat races, and the grand Onam Sadya feast. The cooler climate during these months makes it an ideal time for travellers to explore India's many traditions and customs, from the Durga Puja pandals in Kolkata to the magical Ziro Festival of Music in Arunachal Pradesh. Each festival welcomes visitors to partake in the warmth and hospitality that India is renowned for, making it a truly unforgettable time to visit the country.

[Read more about fairs & festivals in India](#)

BELIEFS AND RITUALS DURING FESTIVALS REFLECT A DEEP REVERENCE TO GOD AND NATURE



GANESH CHATURTHI

Praying to Lord Ganesha during this festival is believed to remove obstacles in life and bring good fortune



DIWALI

Lighting lamps and performing Lakshmi Puja is believed to invite prosperity and dispel darkness and ignorance



NAVRATRI

Worshipping the nine forms of Goddess Durga during Navratri is believed to bestow power, prosperity and wisdom



ONAM

Performing prayers and rituals is believed to welcome the spirit of King Mahabali bringing abundance and happiness

Truly Indian

Smaller off-beat towns in India have a charm that contrasts starkly with bustling cities. They provide an authentic glimpse into rural life, their customs, local crafts, and unspoiled natural beauty. The simplicity of these towns allows travellers to connect with the cultural and historical background. Recognising the value, the Indian government is actively promoting rural tourism to boost economic and cultural sustainability, with infrastructure development, preservation of heritage sites, and support for local artisans. By encouraging travel to these towns, the government aims at creating a balanced tourism landscape that benefits both visitors and local communities.

ENJOY THE RUSTIC CHARM AND SCENIC BEAUTY OF TALAO VILLAGE



Talao

Talao Village stands out as a remarkable destination for travellers, with a blend of cultural richness and natural beauty, setting an example of how tradition and sustainability can coexist. Situated about 60 km from Delhi in the Jhajjar district of Haryana, Talao has earned recognition as the Best Tourism Village 2023 in the bronze category. This accolade highlights its commitment to farm tourism, where visitors can participate in traditional farming practices, horticulture, and innovative methods of water conservation. With its rich farmlands and traditional architecture Talao offers an opportunity to explore the surrounding region.

Talao is also a gateway to several natural wonders, such as the Bhandawas Wildlife Sanctuary, Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary, Hari-van-Aushadh Vatika, and Navgraha Vatika. Talao is a living example of sustainable tourism, where every visit supports community-driven initiatives and eco-friendly practices, from engaging with local traditions to exploring scenic landscapes. In recent years, The Haryana government has invested in developing eco-friendly infrastructure, improving sanitation, and promoting sustainable agricultural practices. Local efforts are preserving traditional crafts and organising cultural festivals, making Talao a shining example of rural development and cultural preservation.



Things to do:

- ▶ **Explore farm tourism:** Participate in traditional farming and horticultural practices, and learn about composting and water conservation techniques.
- ▶ **Experience local initiatives:** Attend workshops on organic farming, rainwater harvesting, and sustainable practices, like reducing plastic use and supporting eco-friendly initiatives.
- ▶ **Engage in Community Activities:**
 - a. Participate in the open village fairs where local farmers and artisans sell handmade crafts and produce.
 - b. Experience the 'Gau Gram' initiative where women are empowered to produce and sell composting products.
- ▶ **Explore sustainable sites:** Visit buildings made from recycled materials and appreciate the village's commitment to preserving its cultural identity through sustainable construction.
- ▶ **Support local economy:** Purchase locally grown vegetables, sugarcane, and handicrafts to support the rural economy and engage with the community.
- ▶ **Stay in eco-friendly accommodation:** Enjoy a stay in traditional guesthouses built with recycled materials, offering a comfortable and responsible tourism experience.

- ▶ **Experience local events:** Partake in special events, such as the hosting of G20 anti-corruption group, craft festivals and other cultural programs.
- ▶ **Visit nearby natural attractions:** for a dose of nature and biodiversity.
 1. **Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary:** Known for its diverse bird species and rich wetlands, ideal for nature walks and birdwatching, featuring species like the Indian Cormorant and the Purple Heron.
 2. **Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary:** Wander through this sanctuary to see migratory and resident bird species in their natural habitat.
 2. **Hari-van-Aushadh Vatika:** Visit this herbal garden, with a wide range of medicinal plants and traditional herbs. Learn about local plants and traditional medicine.
 3. **Navgraha Vatika:** Discover this botanical garden dedicated to the nine celestial bodies of Hindu astrology. It offers both a spiritual and educational experience about the significance of plants in astrology.

Incredible India!

Welcome to the Udaipur Quiz!

Udaipur, often referred to as the 'City of Lakes', is a jewel in the crown of Rajasthan. Known for its stunning palaces, serene lakes, and rich cultural heritage. Whether you've wandered through its ancient streets or simply dream of visiting one day, this quiz will test your knowledge about this enchanting city and give you a chance to win a prize! Dive in and see how well you know Udaipur!

Q1. Which famous lake in Udaipur is known for its stunning palaces situated on islands?

- a. Fateh Sagar Lake
- b. Pichola Lake
- c. Jaisamand Lake
- d. Udai Sagar Lake

Q2. What is the name of the palace complex located in the heart of Udaipur, known for its intricate architecture and expansive courtyards?

- a. Lake Palace
- b. Jag Mandir
- c. City Palace
- d. Monsoon Palace

Q3. Which haveli in Udaipur houses an elaborate museum with royal artefacts and traditional costumes?

- a. Bagore Ki Haveli
- b. Jag Niwas Haveli
- c. Shiv Niwas Haveli
- d. Fateh Prakash Haveli

Q4. Which dynasty founded the city of Udaipur in the 16th Century?

- a. Mughal Dynasty
- b. Rajput Dynasty
- c. Mewar Dynasty
- d. Maratha Dynasty

Mail your answers to us at incredible-india@gov.in with your Name, Age, Country for a chance to win prizes.

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