



# 1 JANUARY 2024

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to India

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JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER



# Camel Festival

Bikaner, Rajasthan

January 13 – 15, 2024 | January 11-12, 2025

The shining rays of the sun, gleaming sands and the camel enliven the orange hues of the desert. For centuries, the camel has served as a means of livelihood and the traditional mode of transport in Rajasthan. Yet, the bond of camels and their owners runs deeper- the Bikaner Camel Festival celebrates this glorious animal and its relationship with the people of desert.

Camels at the Bikaner Festival are a vision! The festivities begin with a camel procession in the red milieu of Junagarh Fort. In a unique pageant show of camels draped in the vibrant colours of Rajasthan, they enchant one and all with the graceful beauty of their long, slender necks, thick eyelashes and swaying bodies. In this two-day treat, the camels simply mesmerise the onlookers with their astounding performances – you will be enticed to become a part of the ongoing frenzy of camel races, camel safaris, contests including tug of war and camel milking amidst other activities. Those who cannot help but splurge may spend on the exquisite handicrafts of Rajasthan. Also, soak in the joy of musical concerts, puppetry and folk performance of skirt twirling dances as well as Bikaner's famed fire dance, which can now only be seen during the festival. As the festive frenzy comes to an end, watch colourful fireworks embellishing the night sky.



# International Kite Flying Festival

Jaipur, Rajasthan

January 14, 2024 | January 14, 2025

The International Kite Festival is celebrated on the day of Makar Sankranti, i.e., January 14, and is organised by the Jaipur Tourism Development Corporation. The festival of Makar Sankranti is marked by the transition of the Sun into the Northern Hemisphere and to commemorate this day, kite enthusiasts from all across the world, come down to the Pink City – Jaipur to participate and display their kite flying skills.

In lively colours and myriad shapes and sizes, kites flutter high above in the sky, while those down below controlling them compete over cutting one another's kite strings.

Women prepare special Indian sweets and savouries such as til papdi and laddoos with sesame seeds and sugar, to mark the festival. The day is also characterised by many helping for a cause, giving to the poor and the needy.

The festival is held at the Polo Ground of Jaipur and Jodhpur. A kite market is set up, comprising food stalls, accompanied by cultural performances and special kite displays at night, such as illuminated kites or Tukkals and Kandeel. In no less than a few years, the International Kite Festival has become one of the most awaited and grand festivals of Rajasthan, living up to its expectations of adding colour to the lives of the people.





# Gangasagar Mela

Sunderbans, West Bengal

January 15, 2024 | January 14, 2025

Away from the hustle and bustle of city life, located on an island in the Sunderbans, Gangasagar offers the charms of an un-spoilt beach on the estuary of the River Ganges. The many tales of Hindu mythology and ancient Indian literature such as the Ramayana and works of Tagore and Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay mention Gangasagar. Also known as Sagardwip, Gangasagar still remains a much unexplored and unexploited territory.

Every year on Makar Sankranti, in mid-January, pilgrims from all over India, gather at Gangasagar for a holy dip at the confluence of the River Ganga and the Bay of Bengal. After the refreshing and cleansing holy dip in the river, the pilgrims offer 'Puja' or worship at the Kapil Muni Temple. The Gangasagar Mela (holy fair) held during Makar Sankranti is often said to be one of largest religious congregations. Many wandering ascetics and sadhus also show up during the fair.



# Pongal

Kerala

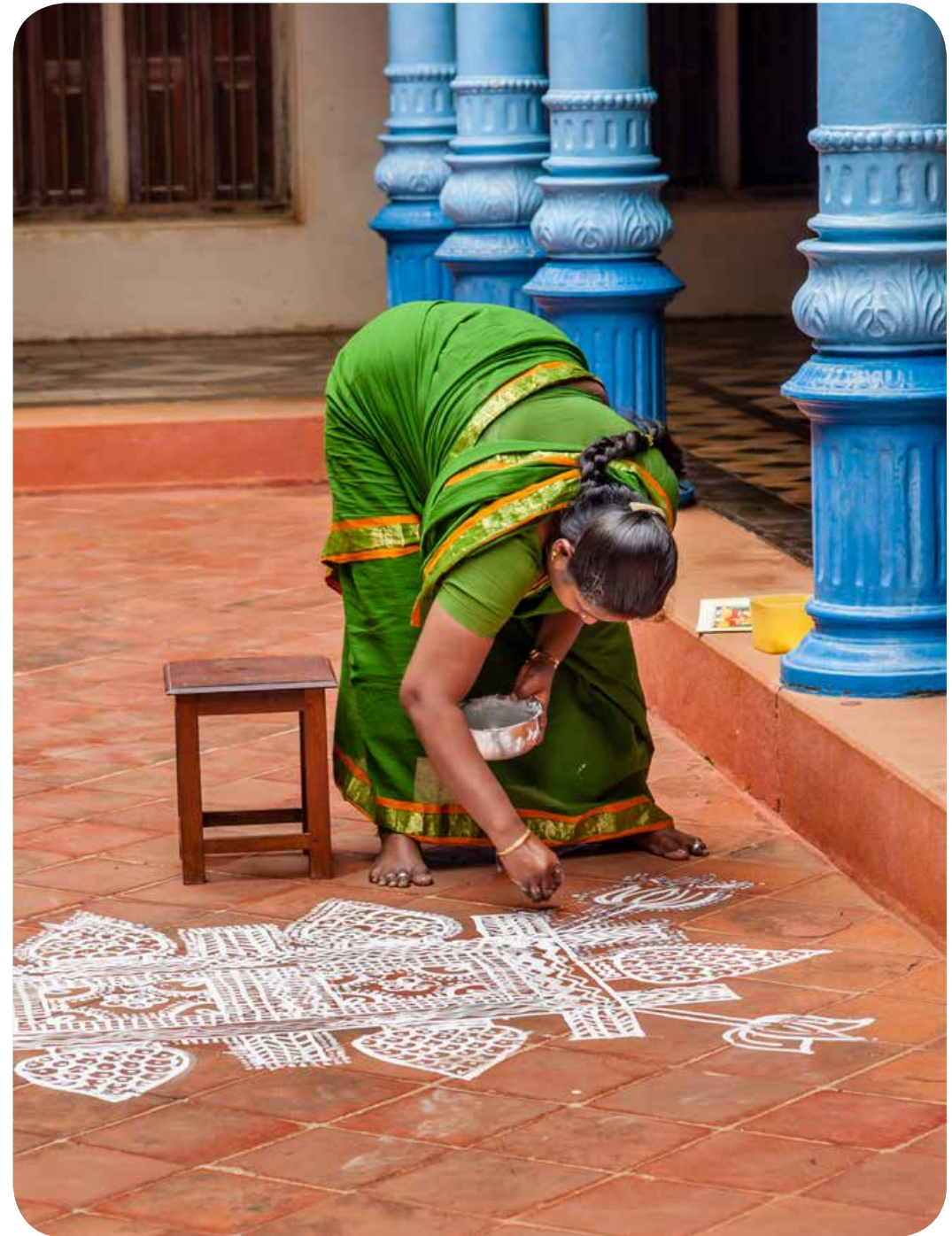
January 15, 2024 | January 14, 2025

In an earthen pot, almost brimming over with milk simmering atop a fire, rice and other cereals are added, to create Pongal, a thanksgiving feast. This is the offering to the Sun God, the life-giver of all that exists.

Decked in traditional attire, men as well as women and children sing and dance, expressing profound joy as they thank the rain God, Lord Indra. Cattle bedecked with multi-coloured beads, tinkling bells, sheaves of corn and flower garlands too are worshiped. Into the fire are cast token useless household articles during Bhogi Mantalu, so that what was unwanted is put to use, providing warmth during the last lap of winters. For an agrarian society, nothing compares with the joy of a good harvest.

All over India, the harvest season is celebrated with gusto, in its various regional flavours. Celebrated over four days in the state of Tamil Nadu, in the Hindu calendar month of Thai which falls in January-February, Pongal marks the rice harvest.

Along with rice, other cereals, sugarcane, and turmeric (an essential ingredient in Tamil cooking) are also harvested. Each of these is an essential component of the sweet and savoury ritual dishes that are prepared over the four days. Join us as we celebrate the cycle of life, of regeneration and nature's infinite bounty.





# Magh Bihu Festival

Assam

January 16, 2024 | January 15, 2025

The Assamese culture has its fine share of unique traditions and festivals, with the harvest festival of Magh Bihu (also called Bhogali Bihu or Maghor Bihu) being a highly popular festival, marked by lots of fun and frolic as well as religious rituals. It marks the end of the harvest season. Magh Bihu is a joyous affair as it signifies an abundance of good harvest and time for the farming community to enjoy the fruits of their hard work. Naturally, it calls for lots of celebrations.

The festive atmosphere is not just restricted to the villages or agrarian communities – the sense of joy also pervades the busiest of cities. With feasting playing a big role, arrangements start a week in advance and most families start preparing a varied array of delicacies, especially rice cakes. While there are certain twists to the festivities in different parts of Assam, the traditional practice has been to build a Bhelaghor (temporary cottage made of hay) for feasting.

The night before Magh Bihu (called Uruka) comes alive with feasting and merriment and the next morning, people wake up early to worship the fire god. The deity is symbolized by a temporary structure called Meiji – both the Meiji and Bhelaghor are later burnt.



# Modhera Dance Festival

Modhera, Gujarat

January 20 – 23, 2024 | To be advised

The 11th century CE Sun Temple at Modhera in the Mehsana District of Gujarat in western India may be in ruins, but it is one of the finest examples of ancient Indian architecture. Built in 1026-27 A.D., the temple is dedicated to Surya or the Sun God. This remarkable temple was constructed to ensure that at the equinoxes, the rays of the rising sun illuminate the deity in the temple's sanctum sanctorum.

The spectacular Modhera Dance Festival is held every year within the premises of this stunning temple in January. Organised by Gujarat Tourism, the three-day visual extravaganza celebrates dance, music, and art – reviving the state's glorious royal heritage, and recreating the ambience of centuries gone by.

Classical and traditional dance forms from all over the country set the stage on fire, with the incredibly beautiful Sun Temple acting as the backdrop to this celebration of India's beautiful traditions and culture. The biggest highlight of the Festival is the Garba dance of Gujarat. People dressed in colourful clothes perform the vibrant Garba dance. Lights, colours, entertainment, glimpses of culture, and the exquisite setting of an ancient temple make the whole festive experience an absolutely unforgettable affair.





# The Kala Ghoda Arts Festival

Mumbai, Maharashtra

January 20 - 28, 2024 | To be advised

The Kala Ghoda Arts Festival is a unique kaleidoscope of culture and art. Art lovers from all over the country visit Mumbai during the festival that exhibits an extensive array of art, literature, music, dance, cinema and theatre.

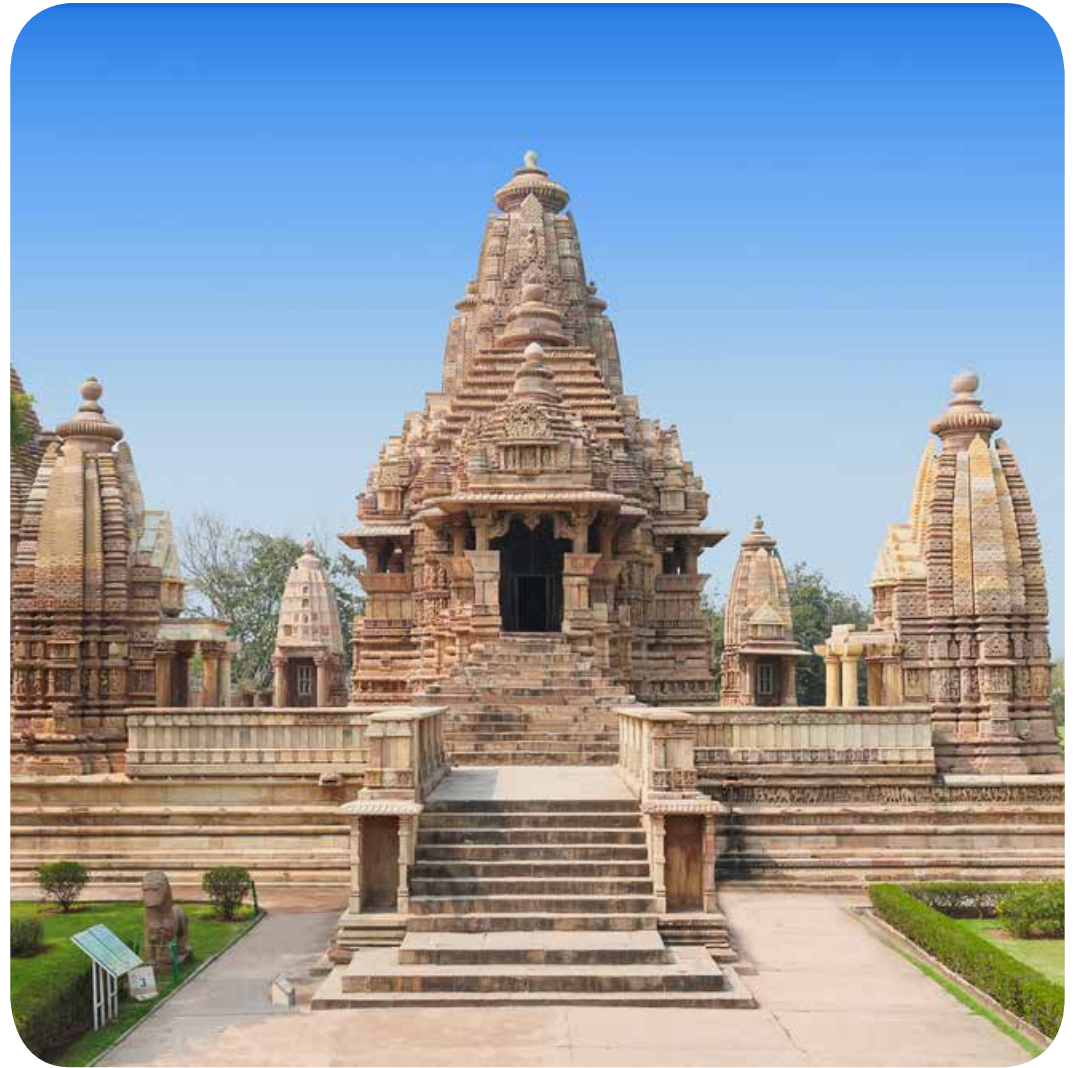
Formed on October 30, 1998, the festival is aimed at preserving and maintaining the art and culture of Sothern Mumbai. The festival was started in 1999 and continues to serve an assortment of arts to its audience. World renowned artists display their works during in the visual arts section. There is also a literature section that works as a platform for book launches, discussions and workshops with popular authors. Eminent artists and groups in the fields of dance, music and drama engage their audience with spell binding performances. The culinary section, which is most popular among food lovers, offers a live food demonstration experience on a variety of cuisines. Art installations in the festival are eye catching and intriguing and develop a sense a curiosity in the viewer.

The festival commences in the first week of February every year and is extremely popular among tourists and participants. An eagerly awaited event, the Kala Ghoda Festival is not just meant for the adults but also offers various events for the children. It is held across different venues including the auditorium at the National Gallery of Modern Art, the garden at the David Sassoon Library, the lawns and auditoriums at the CSMVS, The Museum, Mumbai, and the Cross Maidan, among others.



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# Jaipur Literature Festival

Jaipur, Rajasthan

February 01 – 05, 2024 | To be advised

Bursting at its seams, for five days every year in January, the quaint and resplendent little property of Diggi Palace plays host to the 'largest free literary festival on earth'.

From a modest beginning of about 100 participants in 2006, today it attracts around 250,000 footfalls from book enthusiasts, culture aficionados, and from the elderly to the youth. Even the very youngest come to visit. Some of the best writers from the Indian subcontinent and the works of regional writers are showcased across numerous simultaneous sessions held over five days. From fiery debates to raucous laughter, musical renditions under the star lit sky, tales which move the most stone hearted to tears, workshops for budding writers, book signings, and serious exchanges on socio-political issues, all of this and more happens here.

Walk into the gates, into a mela (fair) with a difference, for a mela it is in every sense. People dressed in their best rushing to get the prime seats near the stage where their favourites are speaking. Those torn between two simultaneous sessions, bemoaning the inability to double their selves, and those trying to capture the camera's eye, are jostling with those content with wandering in the grounds for a quick break as they wander through stalls, or catch a quick bite. The festival is a must for book lovers, for those who want to interact with some of the best minds, be it literature or serious political issues, for those who love a good laugh and also who want an informed sense of the subcontinent. But, it is also for those who love a crowd. Be part of its jubilant enthusiasm, for where better to experience it than in breath-taking Rajasthan? We can say one thing for certain, no-one goes away disappointed.



# Surajkund Crafts Mela

Faridabad, Haryana

February 02 – 18, 2024 | To be advised

As the time for the annual fest, popularly known as Surajkund Crafts Mela draws near, the ancient reservoir known as Surajkund (located at a distance of 8 km from the city of Faridabad not far from Delhi) gets ready to be decked up for the various events to mark an unforgettable fiesta. The beating of drums, splash of colours and the handicraft items best describe this event. The mela is known to create an ambience of its own and is eagerly awaited by the Indian and foreign tourists alike.

Surajkund Crafts Mela aims to promote the various traditional handicrafts in India. Each year, the organisers come up with a theme that is based on culture and the arts of any particular state. The rural setting of this place encourages hundreds of award-winning artists from every corner of India to come and be a part of this celebration. It also serves as a major platform for the new and upcoming artists who wish to showcase their skills in the field of arts and crafts. Undoubtedly, one of the biggest craft fairs of India, Surajkund Crafts Mela, which is held in February every year, has marked its place on the Indian tourism calendar in the last 26 years.

A shopper's paradise by its own, the Surajkund Crafts Mela offers exquisite paintings, pottery, apparels, ethnic jewellery, toys, and many other things. A prominent highlight is a fan-shaped open-air theatre called Natyashala is the venue for witnessing soulful music and dance performances. Mouth-watering cuisines from different SAARC countries is an added bonus to those attending the fair.





# Nagaur Cattle Festival

Nagaur, Rajasthan

February 15 – 18, 2024 | February 3-6, 2025

Colourful twirling ghagraas (skirts) and beautiful veils drawn half across faces, enormous turbans (men's traditional head gear), gorgeously massive jewellery and outrageous moustaches; camels, horses, oxen, donkeys, cows, bullocks and other animals together numbering in tens of thousands all form part of the Nagaur Cattle Festival. Adding to this extravaganza are merchandisers and craftsmen and women. Bright hues of red-hot chilli, set ablaze under the bright golden sun, set off a sharp pungent smell, which tickles the nostril. This is the scene in Rajasthan, at one of the largest cattle fairs in the world held in the small town of Nagaur. Lying between Jodhpur and Bikaner, is this ancient habitation which finds its earliest probable mention in the Mahabharata. A spot which provided comfort to lonely wanderers and traders and grew into a multicultural township with a rich tapestry of inter religious life.

The annual cattle festival attracts people from nearby areas. Along with the trading, fairs give the rare opportunity to local people for outings with family and friends. Everywhere there is excitement, with singing and dancing, haggling over prices, feasting and crowds of giggling women trying on bangles and footwear. Adding to the merriment are games and activities such as juggling, puppet performances, campfires and ballads sung by traditional story tellers. Join in this festive atmosphere and take back memories of an Indian village and an experience of a lifetime.



# Taj Mahotsav

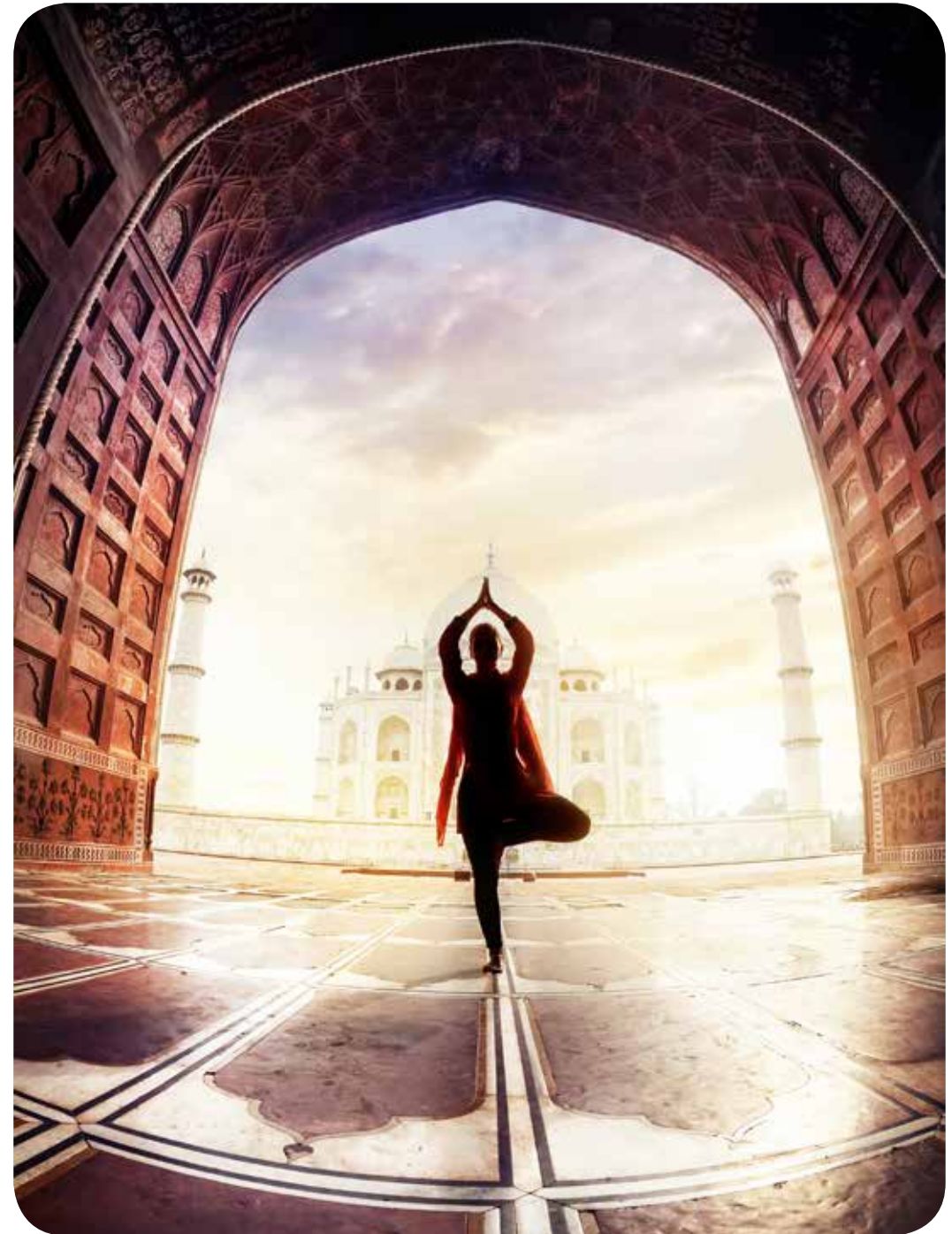
Shilpagram, Uttar Pradesh

February 18 - 28, 2024 | February 18 - 28, 2025

The Indian cultural diversity across almost 5000 years, with changing shades of history and mythology, comes alive during the Taj Mahotsav.

An extravagant 10-day event, the Taj Mahotsav is much awaited and serves as a common ground to bring together the finest of Indian crafts and cultural specimens. Beginning from February 18, each year, it is organised by the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department. The event gives a glimpse of the history and its vast diversified significance through a potpourri of performances. Difficult to miss, the Taj Mahotsav is the perfect venue where one can witness the best of India's arts, crafts, culture, cuisine, dance and music, all under the same roof. An aristocratic ensemble of hundreds of Indian musicians, folk artists and dramatists ensures that the event leaves a mark in the memory of the spectators, especially those who have a soft corner for folk and classical arts. Along with the charming artists, the Taj Mahotsav also serves as a unique shopping destination, offering a variety of antiques, handicrafts, wood and ivory works.

The wide spectrum of folk music, shayari (poetry) and dance performances together ensure a spectacular experience and remain a major tourist attraction. Each year, it is celebrated with a theme that sends out a message to the whole world.





# Khajuraho Dance Festival

Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh

February 20 - 26, 2024 | To be advised

Khajuraho Dance Festival is organised by the Madhya Pradesh government to promote the cultural heritage of the land and traditional dances of India. Held at the famous temples of Khajuraho, it is all the more interesting for the stunning architectural background.

Classical dancers from all over India and also world-over participate in the week-long festival against the backdrop of marvellously illuminated Khajuraho shrines. A variety of classical dances, such as Kathak, Kuchipudi, Odissi, Bharatnatyam, Manipuri and Mohiniattam, are performed at the festival and attract tourists from world over. The festival celebrates the heritage of India and is one of the most important cultural events in the state of Madhya Pradesh.

As a result, the festival has earned a global recognition for itself from different renowned dance schools across the world. Providing an opportunity for the international display of local talent and art, the festival witnesses tourists from abroad, giving it the culturally extravagant hue that makes it one of a kind.



Courtesy: Khajuraho Dance festival



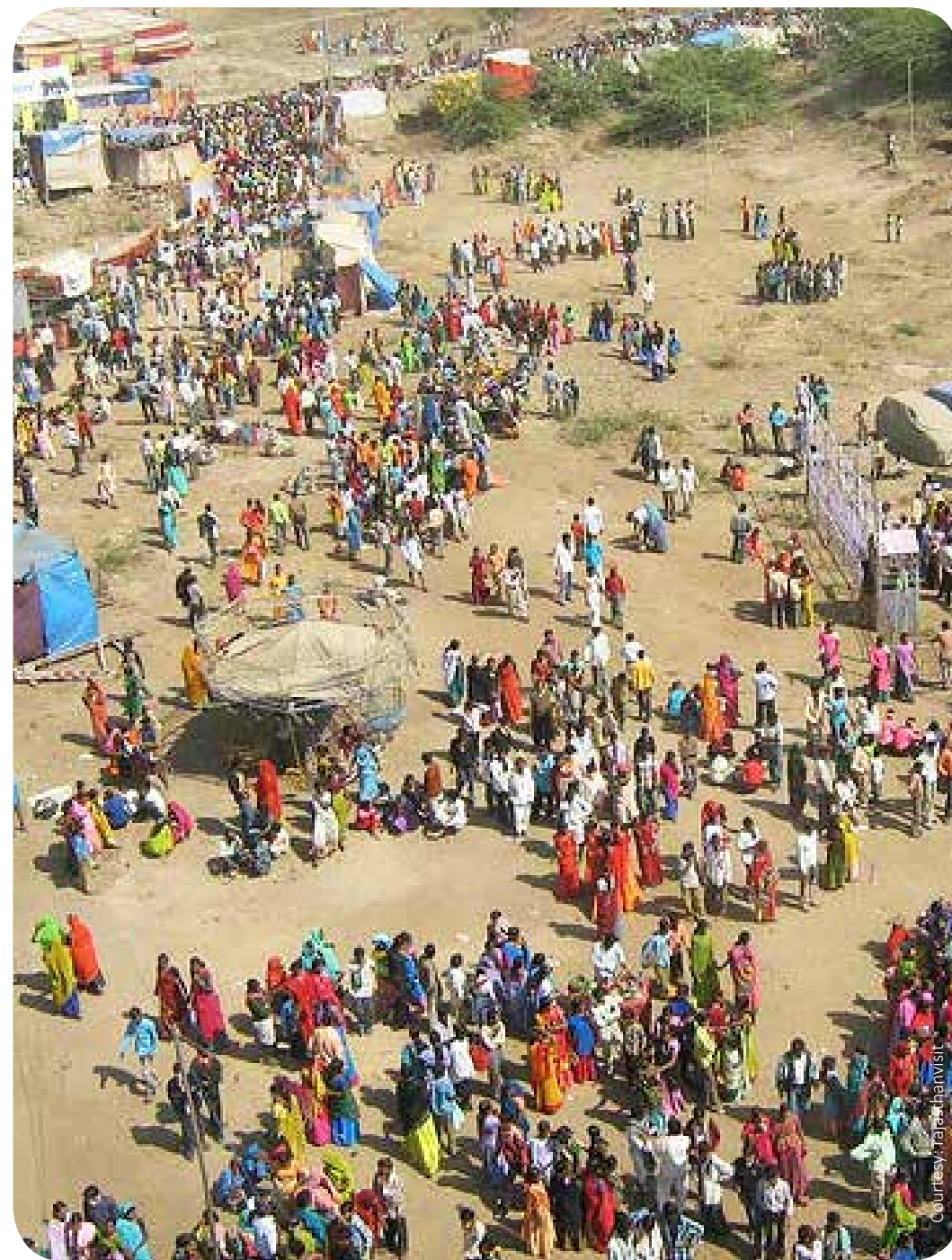
# Baneshwar Fair

Dungarpur District, Rajasthan

February 20 - 24, 2024 | To be advised

The Baneshwar Fair is a spectacle, which presents shades of saffron, deep devotion, early morning skies and brilliant sunsets. This fair largely attracts the Bhil tribe and most people pour in from the districts of Dungarpur, Udaipur and Banswara. During the festival, the sacred Shiva Linga in Dungarpur's Mahadev Temple is worshipped by throngs of devotees.

Located in a small delta 50 km away from Dungarpur, the fair resonates with the gaiety of songs, graceful folk dances, exciting magic shows, animal shows and incredible acrobatic feats. The joy rides on the merry-go-rounds and swings form the cherry on the cake, which add to the excitement and spirit of the festival. The proceedings begin in the morning, where saffron is applied to the Shiva Linga, following which, it is bathed, and a ceremony of aromatic burning incense is waved before the deity. In the evening, bhabhut (ash) is applied to the Linga and another ceremony with a fine-wick lamp is performed. The devotees worship both Baneshwar Mahadev and Mavji. The offerings include wheat flour, pulses, jaggery, ghee, salt, chillies, coconut and cash. The highlight of the celebration is when all the Bhils sit together, singing traditional folk songs around a bonfire every night. Adding to the spirit, groups of villagers are also invited to participate in the programme.





# The Desert Festival

Jaisalmer, Rajasthan

February 22 – 24, 2024 | February 10-12, 2025

The Desert Festival or the Jaisalmer Desert Festival is held annually in February every year. Exciting events such as cultural events and even turban tying competitions take place. The golden sands of the Thar Desert add an enchanting charm to the festival. This is a three-day long extravaganza where the cultures of Rajasthan are on display. The venue is the enchanting Golden Fortress of Jaisalmer.

The festival attracts performers such as folk artists who sing and dance expressively to the triumphs and tragedies of this land and even local nomadic acrobats and other performers. During the Desert Festival, the city and the people start glowing with joy and activity. It also attracts a number of tourists, especially from other countries and is organised by the Rajasthan State Tourism Corporation.

The longest moustache competition is the most anticipated event during the festival. Here, even the guests and tourists are invited to judge the man with the longest moustache. Visitors can be seen posing for pictures with the man who wins this competition. This picture they believe is a moment worth remembering. The other most popular highlight of the festival includes the performances by famous Gair and fire dancers. The Desert Festival is an extensively colourful festival that also offers a shopping experience while focusing on just local heritage and customs.



# Sufi Festival

Jodhpur, Rajasthan

February 23 - 25, 2024 | To be advised

A silent breeze carries into the deserts the hypnotic voices of Sufi masters, while the spellbinding swirls of the mystics' gowns and dim lights transform the corridors of Ahichatragarh Fort into an ethereal bliss. Delightful music, pleasant weather, dancers swaying in a devotional trance; we welcome you to the experience this soul-stirring festival. Lying between Jodhpur and Bikaner is the ancient habitation of Nagaur which finds its earliest probable mention in the Mahabharata.

In this long-inhabited town there are innumerable temples, and also the dargah (final resting place of Muslim saints) of the widely revered Haminuddin Chishti which is about 700 years old. The shrines of the saints embody the syncretism of religious life of the masses, made popular by the Sufi tradition. It is this Sufi mysticism that is brought to life at the music festival which celebrates voices from India and beyond, in musical renditions of the masters, by the most talented performers.

Do join us on this spiritual journey which takes off in resplendent Rajasthan.





# Attukal Pongala Festival

Attukal Bhagavathy Temple,  
Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

February 25, 2024 | February 13, 2025

Discarding all beliefs related to caste, creed or religion, Attukal Pongal welcomes all the women of the world to a grand and huge gathering at the renowned Attukal Devi Temple. Pongala, literally meaning 'to boil over,' is a ritualistic offering of a sweet dish consisting of rice porridge, sweet brown molasses, coconut gratings, nuts and raisins.

One of the few festivals of the world, celebrated only by women, the grandeur and exuberance of the Attukal Pongala Festival has to be seen to be believed. Thousands of women, irrespective of their faith, offer Pongala to appease the presiding deity of the temple; Goddess Attukalamma. It is a spectacle of true devotion, where devotees from across the country and abroad participate in the ritual. The Guinness Book of World Records' lists this celebration because of the high number of women coming together to make this event a success.



# 3 MARCH 2024

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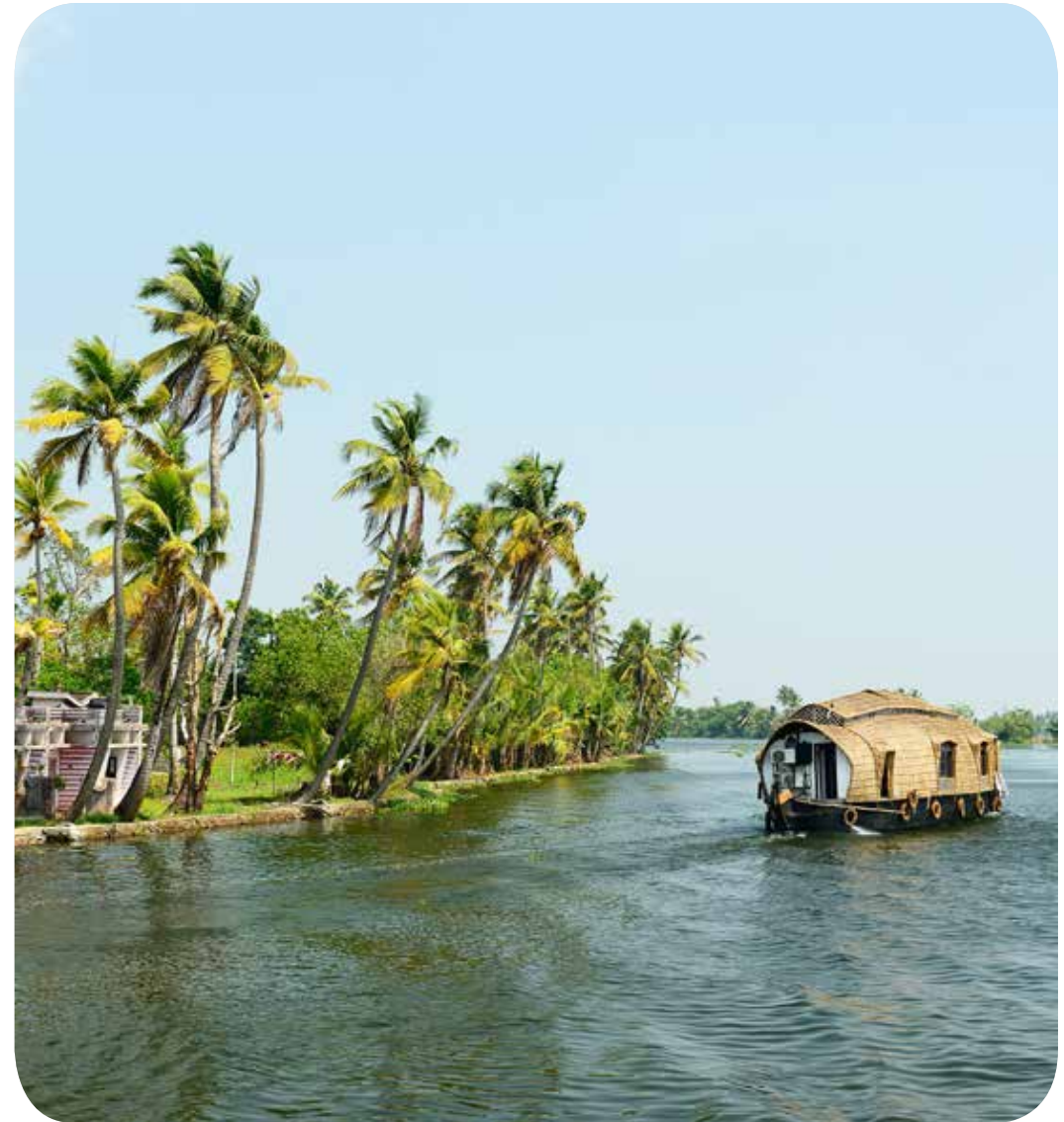
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JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER



# International Yoga Festival

Rishikesh, Uttrakhand

March 08 - 14, 2024 | March 08 - 14, 2025

To celebrate Yoga as a form of living, the Parmarth Niketan Ashram, located in Rishikesh, India, organises the week-long annual International Yoga Festival.

Yoga, literally meaning the union of mind, body and soul with the divine, is not a religion, but a practice, that does not favour idol worship or chanting of certain mantras. An ancient science, Yoga is a form of communication that helps one connect with the spiritual realm and leads to a healthy body, peaceful mind and liberation of the soul.

During the one-week event, Yoga followers learn about yoga through comprehensive lectures and demonstrations of a wide range of yoga styles and asanas, conducted by distinguished proponents of Yoga. The sessions are conducted along the banks of the sacred river and preach the form of living as the celestial unity of the mind, body and soul.

Spiritual masters from India, such as the likes of H H Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and H H Radhanath Swamiji, bless the participants with their presence, satsang and divine words of wisdom.

Hosted across Rishikesh, the Hotel Ganga Kinare is at the forefront of this prestigious event. The hotel has taken it upon itself to present all visiting yoga and meditation enthusiasts, and seekers, with a week-long window into this 1000-year-old traditional art form and way of life.



# Paripally Gajamela

Parippally, Kerala

March 10, 2024 | To be advised

Majestic, magnificent and richly decorated in colourful fabrics and ornaments – this is how the elephants look during the Paripally Gajamela in Kerala. Also known as the ‘festival of elephants’, 50 of these tuskers are a treat to behold during the 10-day festival, which is held at the Kodimoottil Sree Bhagavathi Temple at Paripally. These elegantly decorated animals share their space with mahouts who sit atop them holding a colourful muthukuda (silk parasols) aalavattom (peacock feather fans), and venchamaram (white tufts). The festival is a tribute to the Goddess Bhadrakali and it takes place during the month of Kumbham (February to March).

The procession of all the elephants together on the final day of the festival is complete with Thalappoli i.e. women in traditional attire holding lighted lamps in decorated platters. The ninth day of the festival marks the event of Kuthiyottam, a ritual in which the devotees attach metal rods to their body. This ritual is a symbolic representation of bali or sacrifice.

There are several cultural programmes that are also arranged in the premises of the temple during the duration of the festival. Percussion instruments are a highlight of the festival as they are played with great delight and enthusiasm. The festival sends out a message of togetherness, devotion and faith.





# Braj Festival

Bharatpur, Rajasthan

March 19 – 20, 2024 | March 09 – 10, 2025

Come witness a splash of cultures with vibrant colours. An occasion celebrated with such zest; the Braj Festival is rejoiced every year before Holi. It is the time of the year when people from the Bharatpur district in Rajasthan paint their houses in bright colours and the entire region is engulfed in the spirit of dance and rejoicing celebrating Lord Krishna who spent his childhood in Brij.

Also known as 'Brij Mahotsava', the festival is celebrated for three days in the first fortnight between the New Moon and Full Moon nights in Shukla Paksha, as per the Hindu calendar. It is a visual treat to watch the villagers dancing in their traditional attires with the melody of their folk music playing in the background. Don't miss the Raslila, a dance, which is said to have been performed by Lord Krishna and his beloved, Radha, in their moments of deep intimacy and affection. The festival has also proved to be a platform to popularise folk dance and opera by several professionals and amateurs. The villagers celebrate this occasion by exhibiting their culture and giving an opportunity to people all over the world to come and enjoy the local hospitality.





# Peruvanam Pooram Festival

Thrissur, Kerala

March 20, 2024 | To be advised

The Peruvam Temple in the Cherpu district of Kerala receives a larger than life charm as it prepares itself during the Peruvanam Pooram Festival. This festival takes place during the months of March and April or the Malayalam month of Meenam.

The festival is considered to be one of the most popularly celebrated temple festivals in the state of Kerala. The commanding deity is Lord Shiva. Legend goes that the present sreekovil (sanctum sanctorum) was primitively a tree on which Lord Shiva used to meditate. The current version of the festival is considered to have been existing since around 1430 years.

Traditionally, worshipping elephants in Kerala during an important festival is considered to be sacred. In the same way, during the Peruvanam Pooram festival, the cavalcade includes a deity atop a grandiose elephant along with six other majestic elephants. Panchari melam is an enchanting feature of the festival that starts past midnight and is followed by spellbinding fireworks.

The visual treat of the procession and the mesmerising beats of the music played on percussion instruments by locals make this an awe-inspiring sight.





# Arattupuzha Pooram

Thrissur, Kerala

March 23, 2024 | To be advised

Witness the mother of all Pooram festivals, with the grandeur and spirit of an incredible magnitude. The Sree Sastha Temple, dedicated to Lord Ayyappa, is prepared for the festivities and is said to have housed him for over 3000 years. This festival is believed to celebrate Lord Ayyappa's rendezvous with the Gods and Goddesses of the neighbouring villages.

Visitors from far and wide reach the village of Arattupuzha, 15 km away from Thrissur, to be a part of this significant seven-day celebration in Kerala. The devotion and excitement reaches its pinnacle especially during the last two days. An assembly of caparisoned elephants and the staging of percussion ensembles form a part of the ceremony called Sasthavinte Melam in the evening prior to the last day of the festival. Brightly lit traditional lamps and huge flame bearing staffs, known locally as 'theevetti,' further illuminate the evening.

At the end of the ceremony, by early morning, the crowds cheer the elephants that proceed to the adjoining paddy field carrying the deities. It is nothing less than a grand spectacle; with about 50 odd elephants lined up to further proceed to the river for the Aarattu Ceremony. A ceremonial cleansing process, involving the immersing of the idol in the river by chanting of mantras and floral offerings, the Aarattu ceremony welcomes crowds from neighbouring temples to join the ceremony at sunrise marks the end of this celebration.



# Hola Mohalla

Anandpur Sahib, Punjab

March 25-27, 2024 | To be advised

Join crowds of friendly cheerful faces as they break into a spontaneous dance to the beat of dhols (drums). Get seduced by the colours of bright new clothes adorning children, women, and men. Be lured by blaring loudspeakers, vying for attention, as they issue invitations to partake in a langar (free community meal). Ogle at the nihangs (Sikh warriors) in their outrageously oversized headgear and blue attire, or simply turn your attention to the hyperbolic displays of masculinities in the sporting arena - we are at the Hola Mohalla.

For seven days in the month of March, the holy town of Anandpur Sahib hosts an unusual festival celebrating the martial skills of the Sikh community. In the midst of fighting, the tenth Guru began the custom of organising morale-boosting mock demonstrations by his regiments. Recitation of beautiful folk poetry from the region dreaming of a new religious ethos offset these militant displays to produce the edifice of the Sikh faith.

Today the tradition continues as a living reminder of the ethos of a spiritual revolt by the common people. Teachings of saints have always emphasised the spirit of giving back to the community; at the Hola, a unique competition between organisers of langar stalls encourages this spirit. No one will go hungry if people share- that, is the message of the langar. Amidst the display of martial skills, it is this message which will no doubt leave a lasting impression.





# Holi

All over India

March 25, 2024 | March 14, 2025

Colours splashing everywhere, people spraying water with water guns and throwing water balloons on each other, laughter, commemorate the festival of Holi. Popularly observed as the festival of colours, this festival has been shaped by different countries in their own way. However, in India it first begins with burning the Holi bonfire a day before the water Holi, which symbolises the killing of Holika. Mythological stories reveal that the sister of Hiranyakashyapu, Holika was burnt alive on this day hence the name 'Holika Dahan'. The festival also marks the beginning of the summer season and the end of winters. It also celebrates Radha's eternal love for Lord Krishna.

The festival of Holi is known by different names in different parts of the country. In Bihar it is called Phagwa, Dol Purnima in Bengal and Punjab recognises it by the name of Holi Mohalla. However, the most glorious of all is the Holi of Mathura that lasts for 16 days and is predominantly played with flowers.

With Holi comes the preparation of sweets and delicacies, with Gujiya (fried sweet dish with savoury fillings) being the most relished of all.

It is believed that Holi is the day when one gets rid of past errors and ends conflicts. On this day, people pay the debts that have been long waiting to end. It is the beginning of the spring season and for many it is also the beginning of a new year.





# Holi at Diggi Palace

Jaipur, Rajasthan

March 25, 2024 | March 14, 2025

Spring in Jaipur is simply enchanting. Come March and a delightful time is in store for those who want to celebrate the beautiful festival of Holi in an especially earthy and homespun yet regal ambience.

Come with us as we take you away from the noise and crowds of the streets outside...in through the majestic wooden doors...and enter the vast, lovely lawns of the quietly elegant Diggi Palace. As the doors shut behind you, the garden is transformed into a riot of brilliant colours! Welcome to the Diggi Palace!

The Diggi Palace is iconic of Jaipur and is renowned as the perfect setting for some of the city's finest cultural events – it is, in fact, the ideal place to celebrate Holi and enjoy the bounties of spring.

With traditional drums and folk dancers, shimmering mounds of organic colour, tubs of cool water, and classic culinary preparations and local brews, Holi at the resplendent Diggi Palace, is literally an affair to remember! So go on, wear your immaculate whites and join us at the Diggi Palace, to play Holi...

Experience pure joy as you watch the first burst of colour transform your clothes into a multi-hued canvas, feel the shower of petals, and the smear of coloured powder, as you soak in the superbly intimate, old-worldly surroundings and make new friends...join in the song and dance, taste fabulous dishes, and savour every unforgettable moment of your special time here.





# 4 APRIL 2024

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11 Mewar Festival

19 Thrissur Pooram

14 Baisakhi



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JANUARY

FEBRUARY

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DECEMBER

# Mewar Festival

Udaipur, Rajasthan

April 11-13, 2024 | March 31- 02 April, 2025

The beautiful and romantic city of lakes, Udaipur, celebrates the long-awaited arrival of spring with the Mewar Festival. The festival is so named after the Mewar kings who ruled Udaipur and is one of the significant festivals of Rajasthan. It also coincides with the Gangaur Festival, which is especially important to the women of Rajasthan since it honours the Goddess Parvati, the consort of Lord Shiva.

Udaipur is resplendent with lights and decorations, and radiant with the colours of celebration during the Mewar Festival. The festival is a visual extravaganza brought alive with Rajasthani folk music, dance, drama, processions, devotional music, and firework displays.

Gangaur is revered in Rajasthan as the Goddess of marital happiness and conjugal bliss. Rajasthani women, dressed in their finest and most colourful clothes and wearing the most stunning jewellery, assemble to dress the idols of Isar (Shiva) and Gangaur (Parvati). Once the idols are dressed, they are carried by the women in traditional processions through different parts of the city. The women sing and dance as they make their way to the Gangaur Ghat at Lake Pichola. Here finally, the idols are carried in special boats and immersed in the lake, making it the perfect finale for a splendid celebration.

To finish in truly spectacular style, the Mewar Festival lights up the skies with a fantastic show of fireworks.





# Baisakhi

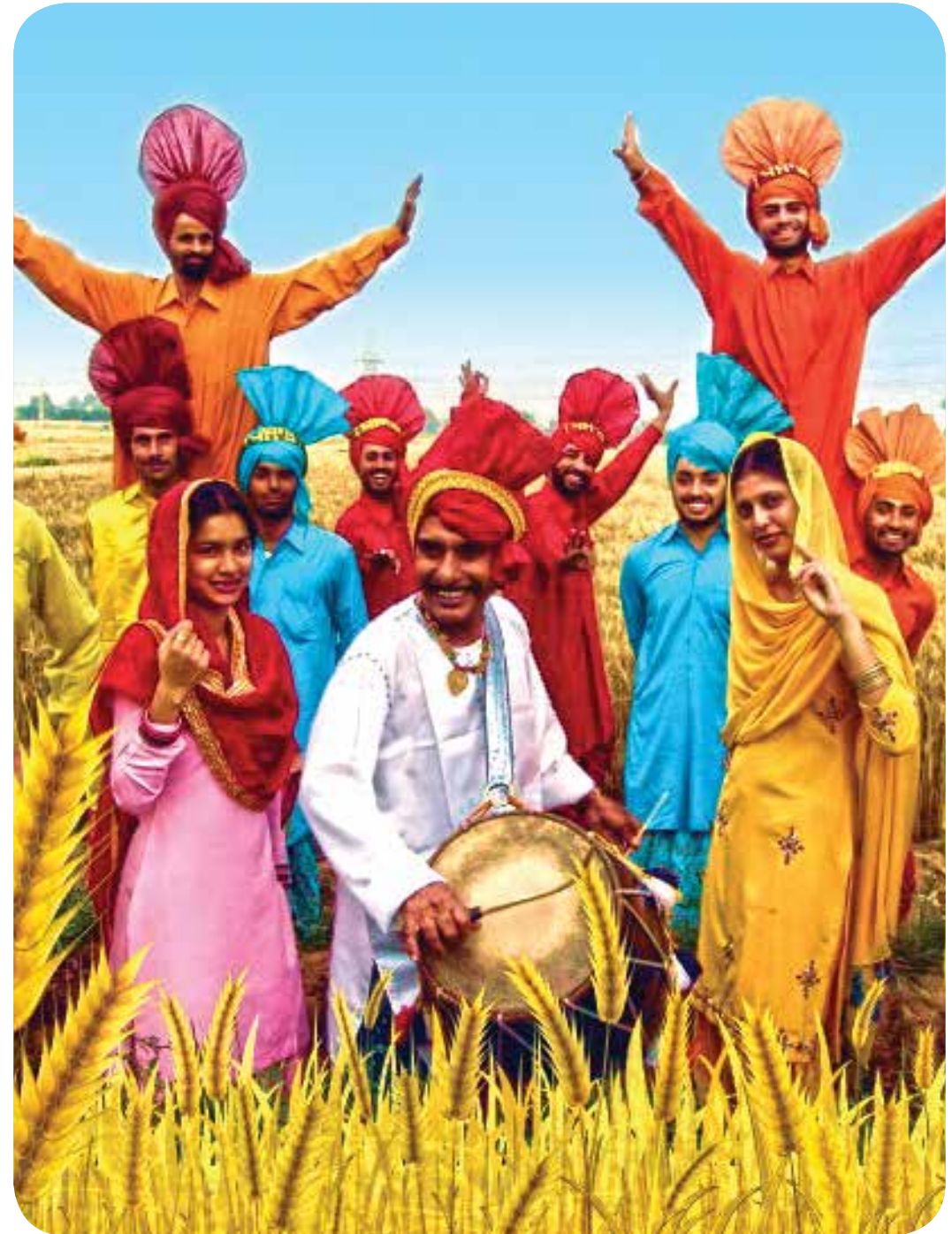
Punjab

April 14, 2024 | April 14, 2025

A gentle breeze swaying through the yellow green treasures of the village brings joy to an agrarian community. A good harvest ensures prosperity and plenty for the coming months, and a thankful community offers prayers to its Gods. Every year in the month of April, the spring equinox is celebrated with gusto all over the country. However, it acquires a special significance for the people of Punjab, as they celebrate not just the Rabi crops but also the institution of the Sikh Khalsa in 1699.

Prayers at the gurudwara start early in the morning after ritual bathing and are followed by langars (free community meals). Chants of gurbaani can be heard in joyous celebrations. Communities, localities, families and friends gather to sing and dance to the beat of dhols (drums). The langars remind of the basic tenets of the faith- simplicity, the importance of community and the ethic of sharing. When the first Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Nanak had preached a new faith he attracted the masses by the simplicity of its message. Inspired by the Sufi and Bhakti traditions, it spoke of a direct communion with God, a simple life and the spirit of community.

Experience the message of this simple faith in the celebration of Baisakhi. The offer of thanks for the harvest amidst massive celebrations, crowds thronging the streets, a general festive atmosphere of singing and dancing, provide a vision of the hearty spirit of Punjab.





# Thrissur Pooram

Thrissur, Kerala

April 19, 2024 | May 25, 2025

Thrissur Pooram is considered as the most colourful of all temple festivals in Kerala. Thrissur/Thrissivaperoor Pooram is frequently also referred to as 'the pooram of all poorams'. It is celebrated every year on Pooram – the day when the moon rises with the Pooram star in the Malayalam Calendar month of Medam. The Vadakkumnathan Temple situated on a famous hillock right in the centre of city, serves as the venue for the festival. People believe that the Gods and Goddesses of the neighbouring temples descend from the heavens to be a part of the celebrations in this temple.

These Gods and Goddesses visit the temple premises sitting atop giant and unusually decorated elephants along with grand ensembles of Chenda melam and pancha vadyam. Around 50 elephants wearing Nettipattam (decorative golden headdress), beautiful bells and ornaments, impressive Kolam with umbrellas perched atop, beautify the festival more.

The festival may be described as 36 hours of unbroken pooram while serving as a place of major tourist attraction. The Thiruvampadi and Paramakkavu temples or Dewasoms are the major points of attraction of the festival. These two temples compete with each other in display of spectacular fireworks.

The festival signifies the coming together of different communities to promote communal harmony. The Muslim community provides the craftsmanship of the Pandals, while the material for the umbrellas called Kudamatton is offered by the members of the church. Thrissur Pooram was started in 1798 by Raja Rama Varma the Maharaja of Cochin from 1790–1805.





# 5 MAY 2024

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23 Buddha Purnima



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# Buddha Purnima

All over India

May 23, 2024 | May 12, 2025

Known by different names in different parts of the world, Buddha Jayanti or Buddha Purnima is celebrated to commemorate the three most significant events that influenced Buddhism. Known as Vesak or Visakah Puja in India, Visakha Bucha in Thailand, Waisak in Indonesia and Wesak in Sri Lanka and Malaysia, this festival commemorates the birth, enlightenment and death of Gautam Buddha.

A divine celebration, it includes prayers, sermons and continuous recitals of the sacred Buddhist scriptures before the statue of Buddha. Aromatic incense, flowers and candles are offered to the statue along with fruits. As part of the celebrations, people sprinkle milk and scented water on the roots of the Banyan tree, better known as the Bodhi tree and illuminate them by lighting rows of lamps around them.

Celebrated every first full moon day in May, it is held in June every leap year all over South-east Asia, including Sarnath in Uttar Pradesh and Bodh Gaya in Bihar.





# 6 JUNE 2024

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17 Hemis Festival

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DECEMBER

# Hemis Festival

Leh, Ladakh

June 16 – 17, 2024 | To be advised

The birth of Guru Padmasambhava is celebrated as the Hemis Festival in Ladakh. Celebrated in the courtyard of Hemis Gompa, which is known as the largest Buddhist monastery in Ladakh, the Hemis Festival is regarded as the most famous Monastic festival, celebrated in Ladakh.

The festival is a two-day celebration that falls on the 10th day of the Tibetan Lunar month. It is considered that Guru Padmasambhava is a representative reincarnate of Buddha. Every year, the Hemis festival attracts a large number of Tibetans as well as tourists who come to watch and celebrate the festival as they watch the Lamas called Chamms perform masked dance and sacred plays. The performances are accompanied by cymbals, drums and long horns. Every 12 years, the festival takes an auspicious direction when the Tibetan year of the Monkey is celebrated. During this time, the two-storey high 'Thanka' or a religious icon painted or embroidered on cloth depicting Padmasambhava is displayed.

Lamas can be seen dressed in colourful brocades and masked attire while they perform the dance where the underlying theme is good defeating the evil, i.e. Gods defeating the Demons. The different Mudras performed as a part of this dance symbolise the various aspects of the dance drama. Some other performers wear masks representing different divinities of religious or historical importance. Local people become a part of the festival by wearing their finest traditional apparel for the occasion.





# 7 JULY 2024

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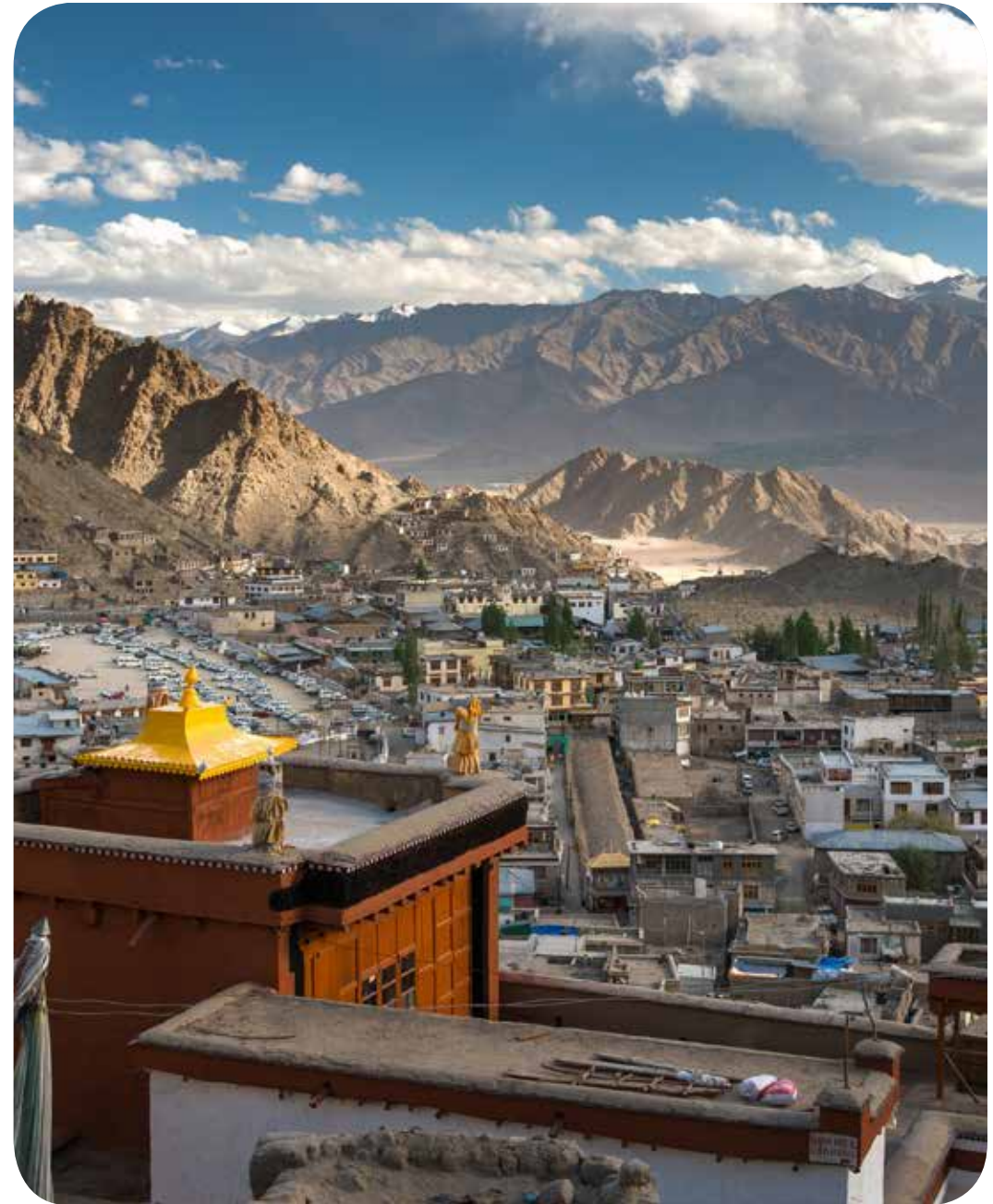
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07 Rath Yatra

JANUARY

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DECEMBER

# Rath Yatra

Puri, Odisha

July 07, 2024 | June 27, 2025

Enormous chariots built to specification, in bright colours and with elaborate decoration, pulled by a frenzied crowd through the streets of Puri - the three sibling Gods, Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, and Goddess Subhadra are off to visit their aunt. This annual ritual journey that takes place between Puri's main temple, Jagannath Temple and the Gundicha Temple attracts countless devotees. For non-Hindus and any foreigners including those entering into the Hindu fold this is a single opportunity to get close to the temple Gods whose darshan (viewing) itself will provide moksha (freedom from the cycle of rebirth).

The Ratha Yatra takes place on the second day of the waxing cycle of the third month in the Lunar Calendar, but preparations begin months in advance. Strict rules prescribe every aspect of the yatra, from the approved moment of beginning work on the chariots, to the number of workers and hours involved to minute details regarding dimensions, wheels, colour and decor. The deity is also different, a half body carved out of wood which is changed periodically. Mythological tales explain the incomplete body as the will of Lord Jagannath himself.

Join the numbers which flock to Puri. Be astounded by the sheer size and energy of the procession.





# 8 AUGUST 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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07 Teej Fair

10 Nehru Trophy Boat Race

JANUARY

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OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

# Teej Fair

Jaipur, Rajasthan

August 07, 2024 | July 27, 2025

Women wearing colourful *lahariya* saree and bangles, along with a bindi on their forehead and dark henna on their hands, and the preparation of ghevar (sweet) – all this together symbolises the festival of *Teej*.

One of the most widely celebrated festivals of Rajasthan, the festival of *Teej* involves swaying on swings, traditional songs and dancing. This day marks the coming together of Goddess Parvati and Lord Shiva. Therefore, the festival is considered auspicious for marital bliss.

The most important aspect of this festival is that women fast during the day without drinking or eating anything. At night, they eat the food prepared by the men. Swings decorated with flowers play an important part during the festival as the women wear green clothes and sway on the swings while singing traditional *Teej* songs. The festival is also considered as the beginning of the monsoon season and thus *Teej* also gets its name as the *Saawan* Festival and Hariyali *Teej*.

Due to a number of fairs, the festival of *Teej* also attracts a good number of tourists. Although the exact date of the festival keeps changing, it is precisely celebrated on the third day of the bright half of the North Indian Lunar month of Shraavana.





# Nehru Trophy Boat Race

Alapuzha, Kerala

August 10, 2024 | To be advised

The serene backwaters overflowing, the green earth bursting with life freshly washed by unrelenting rains, and the melody of the birds is matched by the joyous song of the farmer, grateful for the paddy harvest. Preparations gain momentum for the Nehru Trophy Boat race, to win the coveted rolling trophy that will bring joy to the winning village for many months to come. The teams, crossing over a hundred members each, have been living together for weeks, toiling to get into the rhythm which will keep the giant boats afloat. As the participants work under strict rules of diet, daily regimens of exercise, and practicing celibacy to preserve their vital strength, the villagers are busy rooting for their favourite team. On the day of the race, one can safely say that all roads lead to the waters. Large groups of people rush in the morning to grab their favourite spot, on banks and staircases, on roofs and the balcony seats- trees overhanging the channels from which the boats will pass. The Kali-Vallangal (racing boats) start lining up, decked up in bright colours to finally race across the Punnamada Lake, which is truly mesmerising sight.

Tranquil waters burst into shower, sliced by hundreds of oars held by sinewy arms working in tandem with the rhythm of the drums and songs.





# 9 SEPTEMBER 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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05 Tarnetar Mela

14 Onam



# Tarnetar Mela

Thangadh, Gujarat

September 05-07, 2024 | To be advised

Popularly known as the *Trinetreshwar* Mahadev Mela or in other words the *Tarnetar* Mela, the mela (fair) is organised in a village called Tarnetar, which stands 39 km from *Chotila* in *Surendranagar* District of Gujarat. The festival and the mela are celebrated together to symbolise the wedding of Arjun and Draupadi. The fair is held at the grounds of the temple, which is known as *Trinetreshwar* Mahadev Temple. The temple also has a *kund* or a reservoir by the name of *papanshu* (the destroyer of sins). It is believed that taking a dip in the waters of the kund is as holy as taking a dip in the sacred River Ganga.

According to numerous mythological tales, Prince Arjun had accomplished the unimaginable task of piercing the eye of a fish in the pond located in *Tarnetar* itself, following which, his famous *swayamvar* with Draupadi took place here. The tradition of holding a *swayamvar* continues here even today. Unmarried men and women from tribal communities, such as, *Bharwad* and others visit the fair looking for a prospective match. The custom goes about that men stand under embroidered umbrellas looking for a bride while the women go around with an umbrella looking for a groom.

The Trinetreshwar Mahadev Mela is a vibrant affair. From ethnic Gujarati costumes to the folk dance to music and the glittering jewellery, everything is a part of the fair.



# Onam

Kerala

September 14-15, 2024 | September 04-05, 2025

The southern state of Kerala springs to life in the months of August and September as heavy rain clouds recede, giving way to lush greens. Ebbing waters leave behind abundant crops of rice, the staple food of the region. Resplendent in its natural abundance the predominantly agrarian culture celebrates Onam, the annual visit of the mythical King Mahabali. Ten days of feasts and festivities mark the welcome of the beloved king who is blessed with the boon of a yearly visit to his people, a boon he asked from Lord Vishnu as he willingly gave up his entire kingdom. His visit brings with it the prosperity and a reminder of times, when under his rule, people lived in harmony and fulfilment.

The natural wonder is rendered divine by feasts and festivities and colourful processions comprising beautifully decorated floats and heavily caparisoned elephants, grand display of flowers, enchanting snake boats gliding down river waters. The exaggerated makeup worn by the folk dancers, the exquisite finesse in the tiger faces painted on the bellies of the tiger dancers are offset by men, women and children dressed in simple white and gold. Markets overflowing with new things provide an exhilarating frenzy and in homes it is customary to buy and use new clothes, utensils, and food items.

Welcome to 10 captivating days in 'God's Own Country' which provide a rich montage of all aspects of life of the Malayali (inhabitants of Kerala) people.





# 10 OCTOBER 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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03 Navratri Sangeetholsavam

12 Mysore Dasara

09 Durga Pooja

15 Hampi Festival

12 Kota Dusshera

16 Marwar Festival



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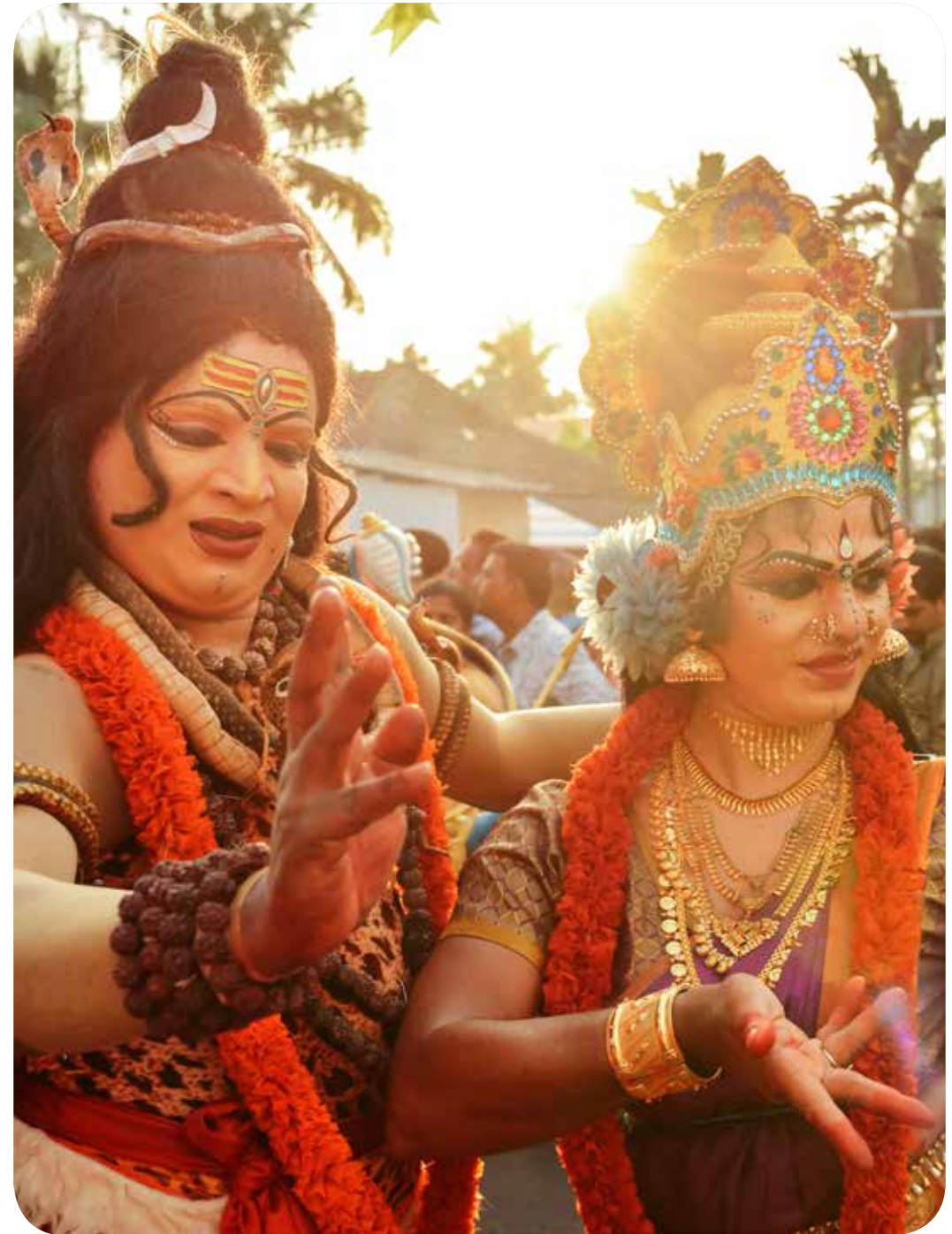
# Navaratri Sangeetholsavam

Trivandrum, Kerala

October 03-13, 2024 | To be advised

The nine days of the auspicious Navaratri Festival in Kerala comes alive with music in the Navarathri Mandapam at the Fort Palace complex in Thiruvananthapuram. The compositions featured belonged to the music maestro, Swathi Thirunal, who was a former king of the Travancore dynasty. The festival is known to adhere to its traditions – be it music or technology, used to amplify the sound. This ancient acoustic technology uses earthen pots of multitudinous sizes and thicknesses that are put up on the ceiling by the means of coir ropes while their mouths face the ground. Even the mouths of these pots are of different measurements. Technically, the pots are placed in such angles that they pose as sound reflectors and thus prevent echoes.

Apart from featuring exquisite Indian classical music, the audience also gets a chance to be mesmerised by traditional dance performances. The atmosphere is filled with soulful music and a distinct smell of sandalwood and flowers that lingers in the air. Oil lamps on the stage add their special touch to the ambience.





# Durga Puja

West Bengal

October 09 – 13, 2024

September 27- October 2, 2025

The ulu-dhwani (a sound made by rolling the tongue) and shankh-dhwani (sound of blowing a conch) pierce the dark nights, warding off evil from wherever the sound carries. The streets are over-flowing with men resplendent in their dhotis (unstitched garment for lower body) and women in their distinctive white and red saris. The nights are a glittering affair with light shows of the elaborate arrangements and the crowds that throng the cityscape. For five days every year in October, the city of Kolkata takes on a new visage as the city celebrates Durga Puja, the largest and most vibrant festival of Bengal.

The lanes and parks of Kolkata transform into an open art exhibition as various committees compete to set up lavish and innovative pandals (makeshift prayer arrangements), each displaying an interpretation of Goddess Durga. The ten-armed Goddess saved the world from evil when she slayed the demon, Mahishasur. A deity that embodies the power of the feminine both destructive and nurturing, today, Durga is a symbol of woman power. In her modern incarnation, she brings a message of destroying evil in its many forms- hunger, poverty, gender discrimination, ecological change and even terrorism.

Come, join us as we go pandal-hopping and treat yourself to a sensory organza. Take delight in the beauty of a city turned into a gallery; be surrounded by silks and muslins, extravagant clothes, jewellery and makeup. Listen to the fascinating sounds that fill the air. Tantalise your taste buds with the offerings of Bengal. We promise you an unforgettable experience!



# Kota Dussehra Mela

Kota, Rajasthan

October 12, 2024 | October 02, 2025

What better way can there be to witness the win of good over evil, of light over darkness than at the celebration of the festival of Dussehra in Kota? A riot of colours, this festival imbibes the spirit of good among the people and celebrates the victory of Lord Rama over the evil Raavan.

Celebrated with gusto and energy, Dussehra is held in the Hindu month of Ashvin, which is usually in September or October. The people enjoy the excellent theatrical performances and enactments from the Ramayana. Although celebrated all over the country, The Kota Dussehra Mela is unique as it is much more than just the win of good over evil. Well-decorated shops, cultural performances and traditionally clad locals are the things to look out for; right from the time you enter the fair. It is the most important event in the cultural calendar of the city as the history of this Dussehra fair goes back to 1723 AD. More than 75 feet tall effigies of the demons Raavan, Kumbhakarana and Meghnad are burnt on Dussehra day to symbolize the victory of good over evil. Usually these effigies are filled with crackers. A young child dressed as Lord Ram is made to shoot an arrow of fire at Ravana and the huge figure is burnt. Rich in courtly splendour and archaic traditions, the Dussehra festival here is marked by a glittering procession that attracts thousands from the surrounding villages and brings together communities looking to celebrate greatness.





# Mysore Dasara

Mysore, Karnataka

October 12, 2024 | October 02, 2025

Intricately woven with legends and mythology, the city of Mysore is a storehouse of history and cultural festivities. Local narratives reveal that this place was once ruled by a buffalo-headed demon, Mahishasura. The people prayed to the Gods to free them from his reign when Goddess Parvathi came to their rescue by taking the form of Goddess Chamundeshwari – a battle ensued, and it took nine days for the demon to be vanquished. The city derives its name from this demon and celebrates the legendary battle with the Dasara Festival, a tradition started by the Vijayanagar kings in the 19th century.

During the festivities, the Mysore Palace is adorned in lights and the streets become vibrant with the procession of decked-up elephants carrying the idol of Goddess Chamundeshwari in the golden howdah, to be worshipped by the royal family and masses alike, along with colourful tableaux, ecstatic dancing groups and music bands, horses and camels. Across the illuminated Mysore Palace is the local Dasara exhibition for clothes, kitchenware, cosmetic products, exquisite handicrafts and local eatables.

The nine nights are a celebration of Goddess Durga in all her incarnations with special pujas or prayers leading up to the tenth day, Vijayadashami, to celebrate the victory of good over evil, a day when the Goddess Chamundeshwari slayed Mahishasura. Let's see this city in its full galore and fervour with decorated elephants, garlanded idols, folk dance performances, doll shows, food and film festival, wrestling and other sports, fireworks and much more.





# Hampi Festival

Hampi, Karnataka

October 15-24, 2024 | To be advised

Hampi Festival, also known as Vijaya Utsav and Hampi Utsav, is one of the most famous and colourful festivals in Karnataka. Usually, the festival is celebrated for three days in the first week of November. This cultural extravaganza has been celebrated right since the times of the Vijayanagar reign. Full of dance, music, drama, puppet shows, vibrant processions and fireworks, the Hampi Festival is a highly merry affair. Of late, facilities for other fun-filled events have also been introduced. These include rock climbing, water sports and rural sports. During the festival, the entire character of this little town undergoes a change. The environment gets electrifying and people head to Hampi in overwhelming numbers.

In fact, it won't be an exaggeration to say that this is the time, when all the roads of South India lead to the prehistoric city of Hampi. After all, it's believed that this mega-festival is a congregation of various events highlighting the glorious past of India. The festival also attracts classical Indian dancers, Carnatic vocalists and other renowned artists. They put up lots of brilliant performances. Some of the top highlights of the Hampi festival are the Light and Sound Show, huge colourful processions and the overall display of the military might of Hampi's golden era.





# Marwar Festival

Jodhpur, Rajasthan

October 16-17, 2024 | October 6-7, 2025

The ancient state of Marwar was founded in 1459 A.D. by Rao Jodha who was the chieftain of the Rathore tribe of Rajputs. The Rajputs were famed not only for their valour and courage on the battlefield but also for the strong chivalric code of conduct they adhered to, lifelong. These warriors were icons of loyalty, integrity, strength, independence, hard work, and exceptional military and strategic intelligence.

Centuries later, Jodhpur, in the deserts of Rajasthan in western India, celebrates the memory of these medieval heroes every year for two days between the months of September and October, during full moon.

The Marwar Festival was originally known as the Maand Festival. Maand is a traditional style of folk music that sings the romance and chivalry of the Rajput rulers. The Rajputs are important figures in India's vast history; their deeds continue to inspire to this day. In Rajasthan, tales of how they lived and died are passed on from generation to generation through beautiful and moving folk songs.

The Marwar Festival showcases the rich and vibrant culture of Jodhpur with the folk music and dance of the Marwar region. With their enthralling performances, the wonderful folk artists bring to life the myths and legends of Rajasthan's warriors, and recreate the spirit of a bygone royal era.

There are quite a few other colourful events as well. The Umaid Bhawan Palace, the Mehrangarh Fort, and Mandore (8 km from Jodhpur) are the venues of the festival.



# 11 NOVEMBER 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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01 Deepawali At Diggi Palace

01 Hornbill Festival

09 Pushkar Fair

15 Dev Deepawali

TBA Sonapur Mela

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER



# Deepawali at Diggi Palace

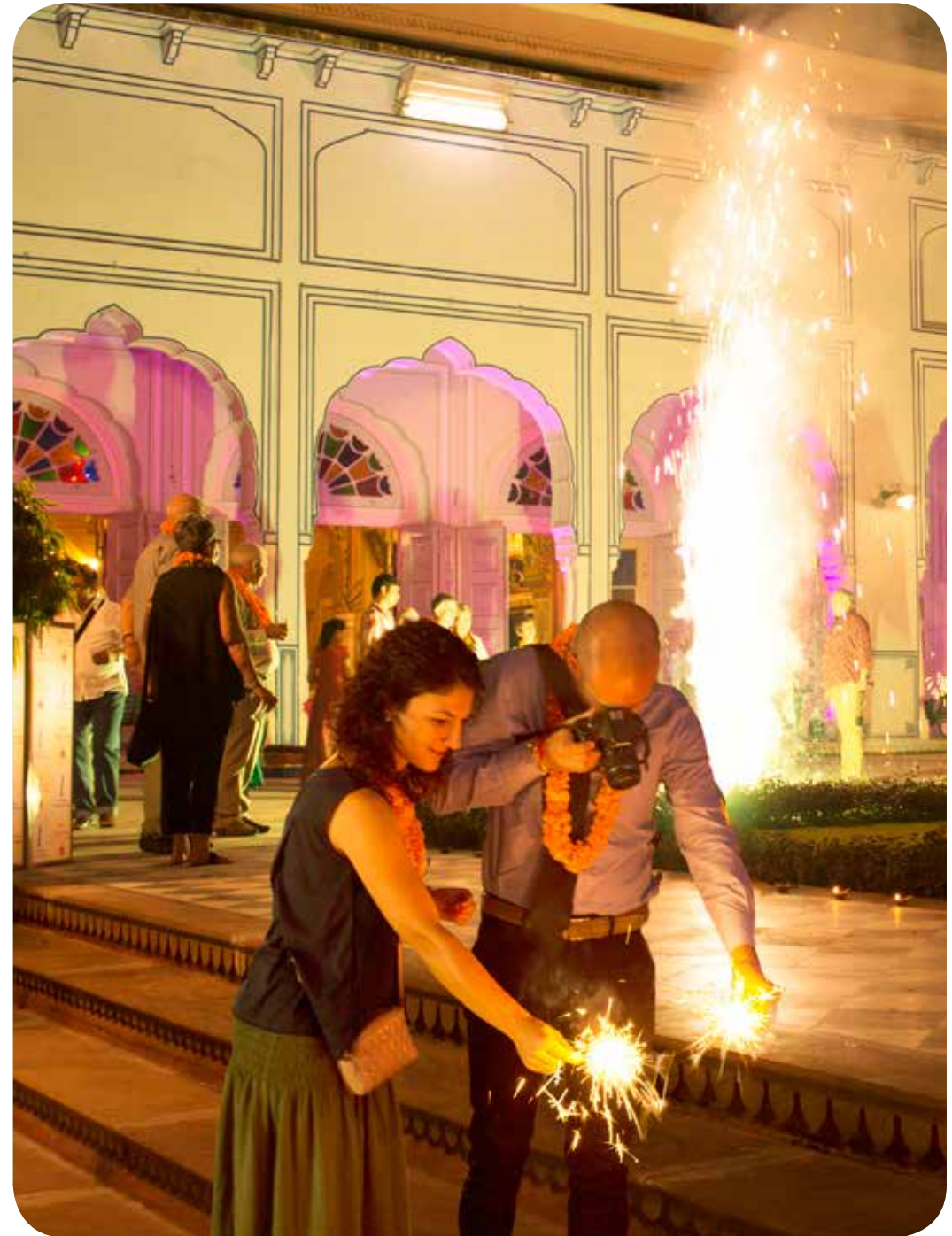
Jaipur, Rajasthan

November 01, 2024 | October 21, 2025

The flickering flames of millions of tiny lamps dispel the darkness of the night. Cascades of light outline every contour and corner; flames of light leap up into the sky only to burst in an extravagant display in the pitch-black night sky. Join us on this first and darkest night of the Hindu calendar month of Kartika, to celebrate the victory of light over darkness, of good over evil. At the small and charming property of Diggi Palace in Jaipur, Rajasthan, step into an ethereal world as you walk past the traditional band welcoming you with a folk tune. Aglow with lights, decorated with lavish rangolis (decorative patterns made on the floor), alive with the rustle of silks, the tinkle of jewellery and the sounds of music and laughter, we welcome you to the most important festival of India.

As with most festivals, Deepawali too is bound in many myths and legends, of which the most important is that of the homecoming of the righteous king and dutiful son, Lord Rama after a 14-year exile. The festival falls immediately after the summer harvest, marks new beginnings, and welcomes prosperity in the form of Goddess Lakshmi. Festivities go on for five days which witness frenzied shopping as it is considered auspicious to make purchases during this period. Gifts are exchanged, and sweets distributed amongst not only the near and dear ones but also neighbours and acquaintances.

Participate in a puja (religious ritual) with the Diggi family, to please the goddess of wealth and prosperity. Receive gifts from the family, a token of our cultural tradition, and a reminder if you need any of this memorable evening. Join in the festivities, dance to the beat of dhols (drums), and enjoy a mesmerising performance by the fire-pot dancers. Listen to live music as you enjoy a scrumptious traditional meal, or as you roam around through the aatish-baazi (fireworks). Try a hand at the phool-jhari (sparklers) or just sit back and enjoy the aerial displays as our evening draws to a close in a blaze of lights.





# Hornbill Festival

Kohima, Nagaland

December 01 – 10, 2024 | To be advised

The earthen colours and a treasure trove of history and culture bring together the Hornbill Festival, celebrating the diversity of customs in warrior tribes of Nagaland. These tribes, traditionally organised, fought each other but came together during World War II to fight against the invading Japanese army. The weeklong annual fest is named after the colourful bird, Hornbill, which is widely respected and depicted in Naga folklore.

With the longing to revive the rich Naga heritage, all tribes dress in their traditional battle-gear and bring alive the age-old traditions at the heritage village Kisama. It displays delicately carved hutments along with remarkable cultural dances, indigenous sports, paintings and sculptures expressing headhunting, and decorated morungs or unmarried men's communal houses amongst other interesting things. One can hear the melody of the log drums, once used to announce the approach and retreat of an enemy. During the lunar and solar eclipse, it is still beaten to mourn for the sun to rise again.

We will take you to these traditional memorabilia which includes events like adventure car rally, world war peace rally, flower shows and fashion shows, and interesting contests of eating king chilli and pork fat. Indulge your whimsical side with the story tellers at the Hornbill Literature Festival here and as the sun goes down each day, tap your feet and let your body sway, while listening to some eminent as well as budding rock-bands from India.





# Pushkar Fair

Pushkar, Rajasthan

November 09 - 15, 2024

October 30 - November 5, 2025

Winding their way down tracks across hills under the blazing sun and onto the yellow shifting sands arrive merchants, herders and traders, on camels, horses, and on foot to one of the largest camel fairs in the country. Pushkar is a small town, believed to be one of the most ancient surviving cities of India, and also one of the five most sacred places of the Hindus. The beautiful lake emerged where the rose petals from Brahma's (the Supreme Creator) flower fell. Innumerable temples including the famous Brahma temple surround the enormous pool of water. The clear skies in their varying hues of blue, white, yellow, and gold giving way to pitch black darkness reflected in the tranquil waters, bestow a calm mesmerising serenity in this otherwise harsh desert land.

The Pushkar Fair is held every year, on the full moon of Kartik month of the Hindu calendar. Although the largest camel fair, horses, cows, goats and sheep are also sold here. Bedecked in bright cloth, dyed, printed and embroidered, wearing outrageously oversized jewellery of tinkling bells, the animals manage to outshine their human competition. Proud owners show off their beloved camels. When people gather in Rajasthan, can the dancers and musicians, the folk singers, and craftspeople be far behind! Do be a part of this exuberant, colourful and boisterous five-day fair.



# Dev Deepawali

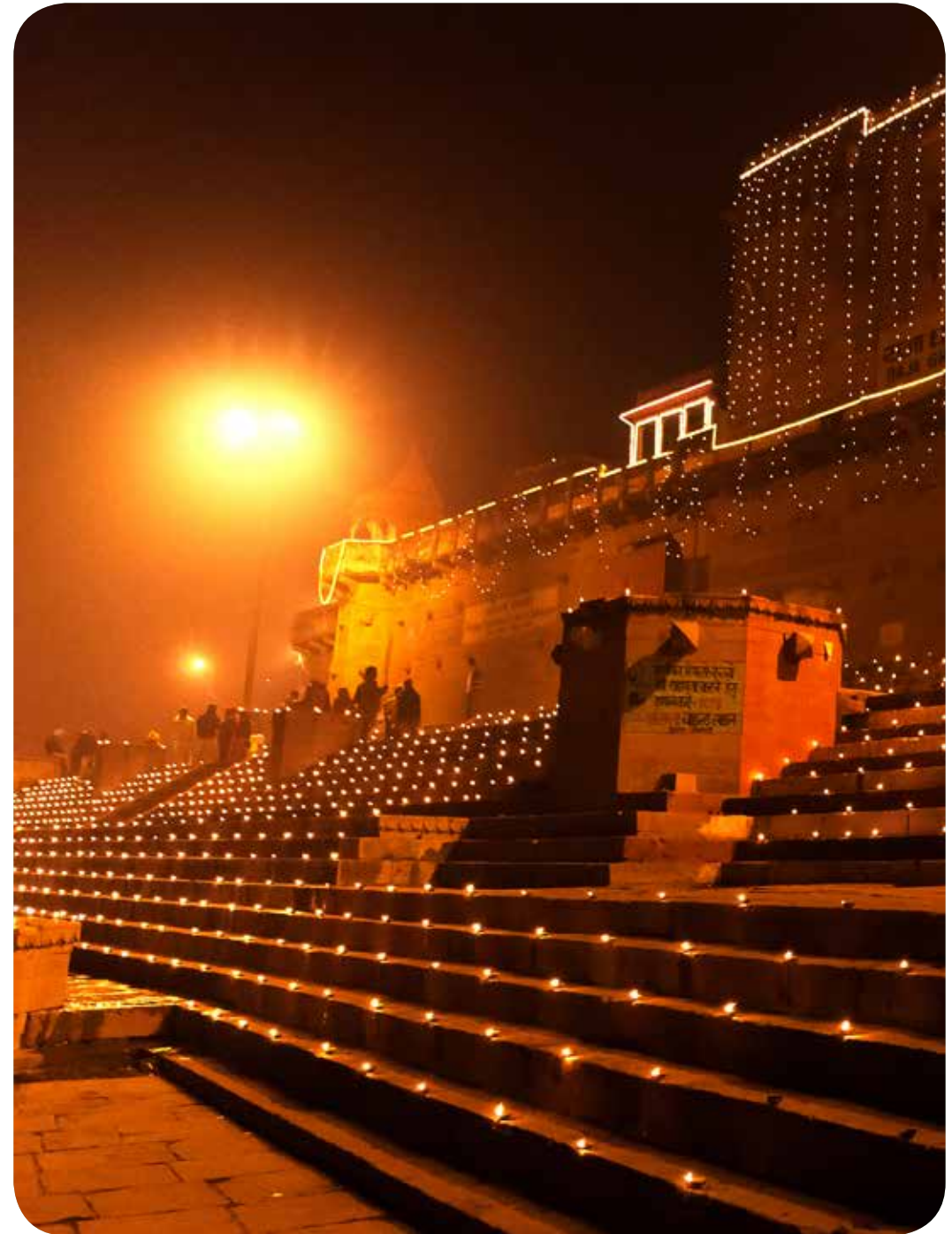
Banaras, Uttar Pradesh

November 15, 2024 | November 05, 2025

Dev Deepavali, which is celebrated every year on Kartik Purnima, falls 15 days after Diwali, and is more like an extended celebration of the biggest festival of India! It is celebrated in Varanasi, which for most travellers is nothing less than a dream destination. The traditional ceremony is an elaborate affair starting with offering prayers to Lord Ganesha, followed by the deepdaan or offering the diyas (earthen lamps) at each and every ghat (stairs leading down to the river) while the priests chant Vedic mantras in the background. It is magnificent and a sight to behold leaving the visitors spellbound!

This is the day when people celebrate Tulsi Vivah which signifies the birthday of Matsya or the fish avatar of Lord Vishnu and that of Vrinda – the representation of the Tulsi plant. Also, the Ganga Aarti, performed on the evening of Dev Deepavali is the most elaborately performed one throughout the year! Picture this- devotees taking a holy dip in the river Ganges, a ritual that is believed to help wash off the sins, alongside the ghats with continuous chants and prayers being offered in the backdrop, with beautiful diyas floating in the water and sparkling fireworks decorating the sky. The actual sight is divine and is sure to leave a lasting imprint in everyone's minds.

Don't miss out on visiting this spiritual, peaceful city of lights during the festival of Dev Deepavali and take in the elements of culture, tradition, spirituality and inner peace.





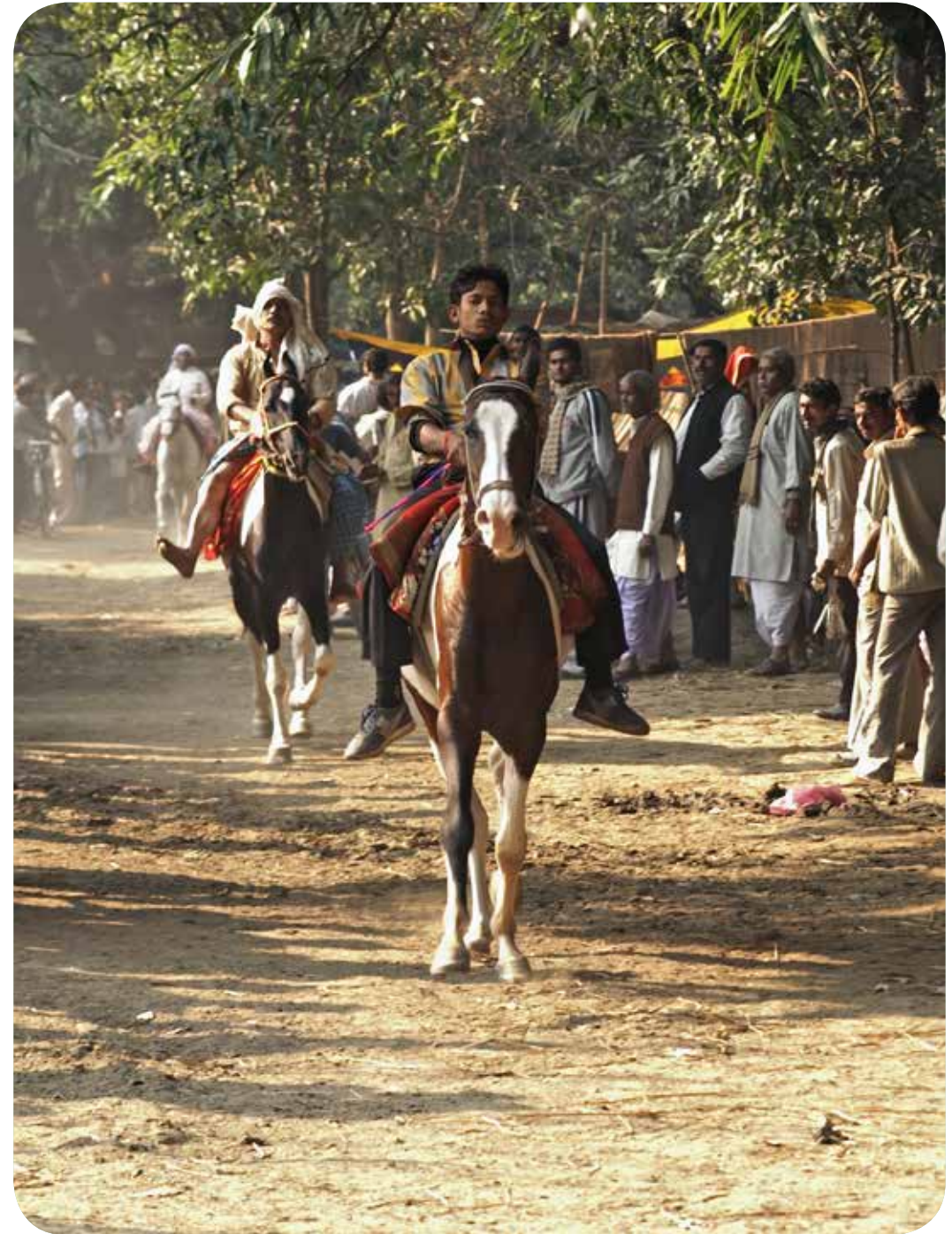
# Sonepur Mela

Saran District, Bihar

To be advised | To be advised

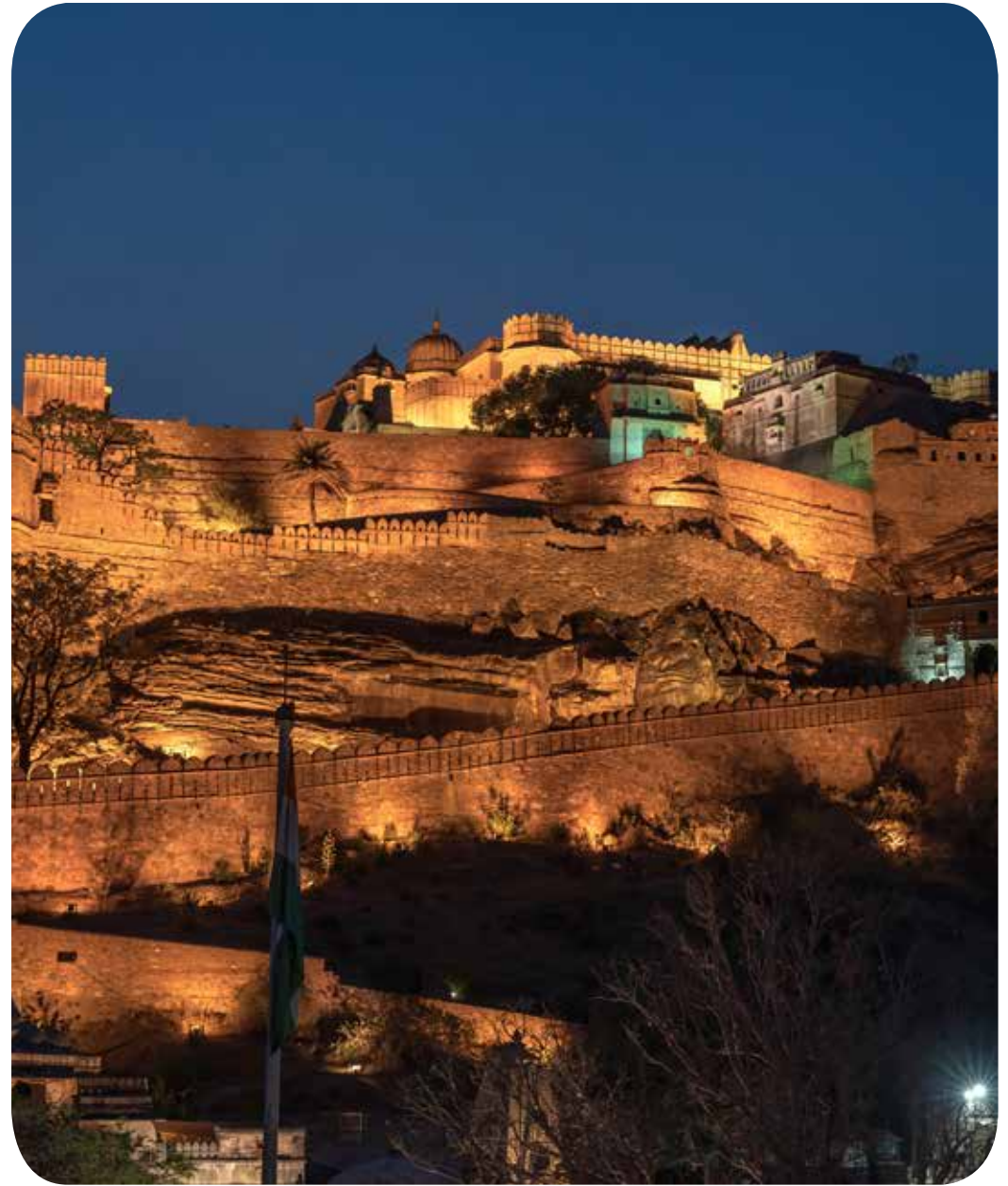
When the moon is in full bloom, shining brightly on the waters where River Ganga and River Gandak meet, some thousands of people, and all kinds of animals and birds flock the grounds of Sonepur, near Patna. The Sonepur Cattle Fair, one of the biggest cattle fairs of Asia, is celebrated on Kartik Purnima (full moon) and continues to attract visitors from all over Asia. It began under the reign of King Chandragupta Maurya (322 B.C.) who used to buy animals from across the River Ganges attracting traders from places as distant as Central Asia. Today, all kinds of animals are on display, from the majestic elephants, baby camels, and horses to donkeys, dogs, buffaloes, and an amazing array of colourful birds. Amidst the symphony of animal noises, excited chatter of people, and booming loudspeakers everywhere, you will find yourself walking on the dusty ground through stalls selling bangles, bags, trinkets, toys, spices, and local eateries.

A thrilling source of entertainment at the fair includes the exhilarating performance at the Maut ka Kuan or Well of death. Here bikers and car drivers, interestingly including women, perform deathly stunts in the most bizarre ways possible. You will have to watch this to believe it!



# 12 DECEMBER 2024

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- 01 Kumbhalgarh Festival
- 01 Lumbini Festival
- 25 Christmas
- TBA Mamallapuram Dance Festival



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# Kumbhalgarh Festival

Kumbhalgarh, Rajasthan

December 01 - 03, 2024 | December 01 - 03, 2025

The Kumbhalgarh Classical Dance Festival was started in order to promote tourism in Kumbhalgarh, Rajasthan. The place is named after its creator, Maharana Kumbha, who was a great patron of Indian martial and fine arts, architecture and learning.

The festival brings together India's art forms and the finest artists – musicians, dancers performing classical dance recitals – set against the backdrop of the magnificent citadel. Local artists also get a boost as they deliver the best of their performances, backed with support from world over. Younger audience are also taken care of with organisation of games, such as, the musical chairs and tug of war.

The festival is divided into two parts – day and night. During the daytime folk artists of Rajasthan deliver folk performances accompanied with interesting competitions for tourists from archery to rangoli and mehendi. While the tone and mood of the festival is subtle by the evening, however, the scintillating and bedazzling explosion of sound, light, colour and dance lights up the ambience with a spectacle unseen at Kumbhalgarh, to celebrate the days of Maharana Kumbha.



# Christmas

All over India

December 25, 2024 | December 25, 2025

Christians across India celebrate their faith on 25 December with Christmas – the festival that marks the birth of Jesus Christ.

Called 'Bada Din' (Big Day) in Hindi, Christmas is a national holiday in India. Even people of other faiths join their Christian friends to celebrate the festival.

Church services play a big role in the celebration. Churches start planning their celebrations and masses, and families start preparing weeks in advance.

Traditionally decorated Christmas trees, giant stars, fairy lights, streamers, flowers, and paper lanterns adorn homes and streets, welcoming all at Christmas time. Beautifully decorated Christmas cribs hold nativity statues of baby Jesus and others.

Carolling processions on streets and singing in homes is a lovely sight on Christmas Eve. But the most enduring and memorable tradition of Christmas Eve is the Midnight Mass. Churches start their services with carol singing, after which the Mass is held. After the service, everyone socialises; feasting together, and wishing each other a Merry Christmas. On Christmas morning, churches hold mass; families and friends enjoy Christmas lunches and dinners; celebrating the end of another wonderful year and the beginning of the New Year.





# Lumbini Festival

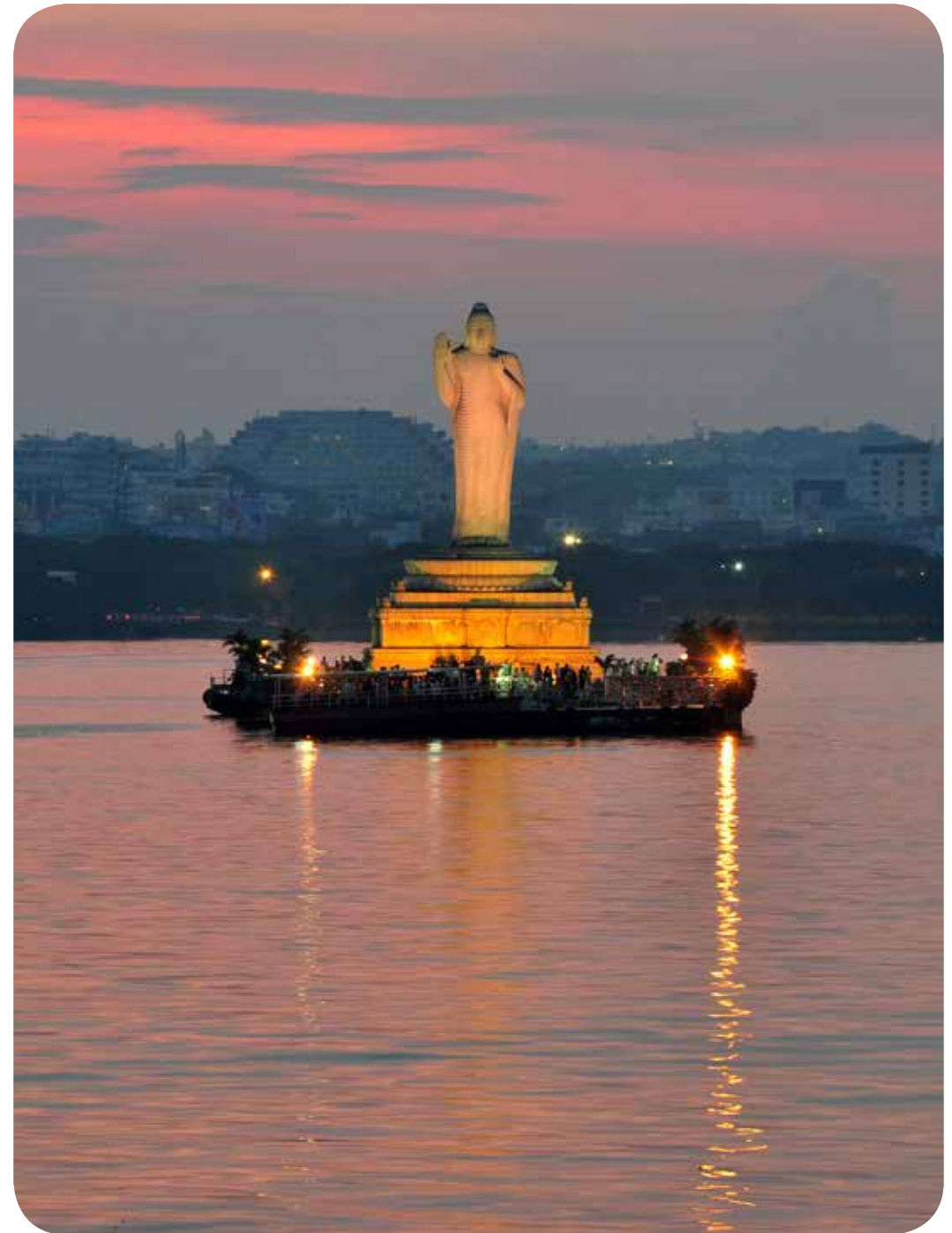
Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh

To be advised | To be advised

Lumbini or Lumbini Grove is the birthplace of Gautam Buddha, the founder and preacher of Buddhism, and is one of the most important Buddhist pilgrimage sites in the world. The Buddha preached love, serenity, compassion, forbearance, peace, and freedom from all desire – universal messages that are practiced and revered by millions of Buddhists all over the world even today.

After 2000 years, the significance, and ancient heritage of Buddhism is honoured every year with the Lumbini Festival, aptly named after the Buddha's birthplace. Organised by the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation, the festival is celebrated every year in Nagarjunasagar in Hyderabad, which is the capital city of Telangana, in South India. The festival takes place over three days in the month of December, and especially marks the importance of Buddhism in the state. Remembering and commemorating the simple yet beautiful teachings and philosophy of the Buddha, the festival organises activities, theatre events, plays, music; also making adequate arrangements for the thousands of tourists and pilgrims who come from all over India and the world to attend it with great faith.

The entire Nagarjunasagar Dam is specially illuminated during the festival. Festivities take place with great grandeur and joy. The three-day celebration is also a chance for local painters, artisans, craftspeople, and sculptors to showcase their skills. The exquisite works on display here not only represent outstanding workmanship but also take visitors back in time – into ancient Buddhist history; to an era of great peace and prosperity.



# Mamallapuram Dance Festival

Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu

To be advised | To be advised

Once the ancient seaport of the mighty Pallava dynasty, Mamallapuram (earlier called Mahabalipuram) in Tamil Nadu, South India, was also renowned as the centre for Pallava art and culture. It is now world famous for its exquisite shore temples, built during the reign of the Pallava King Narasimhavarman, in the 8th century CE. The UNESCO World Heritage listed temples and monuments stand solidly beautiful, facing the sea.

It is against the magnificent backdrop of these monuments and the outstanding monolithic rock sculptures, that the Mamallapuram Dance Festival is held every year. The four weeklong dance festival, held during December-January, is organised by the Department of Tourism, Government of Tamil Nadu.

Paying tribute to Tamil Nadu's rich and ancient heritage of music, dance, art, and culture, the vibrant Mamallapuram Dance Festival also celebrates different dance forms from all over India. Renowned exponents of the classical dance forms of Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Kathak, Odissi, Mohini Attam, and Kathakali perform here during the festival. Folk dances are also performed at the festival.

The stage for the dancers is Arjuna's penance, a stunning bass-relief sculpted on the face of two enormous adjacent rocks. The monolithic rock sculptures provide an amazing backdrop. This remarkable natural open-air stage was created about 13 centuries ago. Dancers, dance lovers, and tourists from all over the world come to Mamallapuram to watch the finest dancers of India perform on this stage under open skies. The ambience is one of an ancient open-air theatre next to the sea!

