

SAARC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

APEX BUSINESS ORGANIZATION OF SAARC

DESTINATION SAARC - III

Lets Celebrate Tourism



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PREFACE

A Traveller's Dream

The SAARC CCI is pleased to present the new edition of "Destination SAARC" to the global explorers and travellers from all walks of life. Being the Apex Economic Body of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the SAARC CCI is dedicated for strengthening regional economic integration and enhancing socioeconomic development in South Asia. In line with this SAARC CCI objective, "Destination SAARC" aims to promote the tourism sector of SAARC nations, i.e. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

South Asia is renowned for ancient civilisations and majestic empires having a remarkable historical background of over 5000 years. Along with high mountain ranges, greenery valleys, deep forests, crystal blue waters, and long sandy beaches, South Asia is a paradise of biodiversity and geological wonders. All these elements of South Asia make the region a travellers' dream, one of the best destinations in the world.

Immensely contributing to South Asian growth, the tourism sector has been playing a pivotal role in the region's economy. Despite the global pandemic that has almost frozen the tourism industry, South Asian countries have gradually been opening their gates for international tourism. Therefore, the publication of "Destination SAARC" is very much timely and highly utilitarian presenting up-to-date facts and information for international travellers and global explorers. The "Destination SAARC" reflects many aspects of cultural, historical, eco and adventure tourism in all South Asian countries along with important healthcare and travel guidelines. In researching and compiling "Destination SAARC", the tireless effort of the team, including Mr. Ali Mufti, Ms. Fatima Anwar, and Mr. Tilan Wijesooriya, is indeed praiseworthy.

Expecting that "Destination SAARC" will be a great source of information and useful guidance, we wish you a safe travel with lots of smiles!

Secretary General SAARC CCI

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT SAARC CCI

It is with great pleasure that I extend my best compliments to the global travellers who wish to visit South Asian countries and explore the beauty and uniqueness of our lands. I am sure that "Destination SAARC" would be a useful guidance and information source for tourists and explorers from all walks of life.

Tourism is among the most notable economic and social phenomena in the present-day world. The role of the tourism industry is



imperative in bringing countries together, promoting social harmony and mutual understanding whilst generating sources of revenue and employment. Tourism in South Asia has been identified as a means of socioeconomic development in SAARC member states. The true potential of South Asian tourism can be attained through a holistic approach to address the development needs of the sector, which is instrumental in achieving the growth in South Asia.

South Asia is a distinct region with a massive contiguous landmass, assorted geographical features from wetlands to deserts, savannas to jungles, coastal areas to mountain ranges like the sacred Himalayas and Everest, a huge variety of natural resources, scenic beauty and rivers, and diverse climatic conditions which make this region even more fascinating. Moreover, South Asia is rich with historical and cultural heritage being a home to ancient civilisations thousands of years ago.

This publication "Destination SAARC" highlights not only historical, cultural, and natural places for explorers, but also important information such as visa formalities and airports, health requirements and facilities, accommodation and transport, climate conditions and suitable clothes, links to relevant government authorities, and many more. This booklet is in fact a comprehensive guidance for tourists, a great portrayal of historical, cultural, eco and adventure tourism in the lands of South Asia.

Therefore, I am very much pleased to share the third edition of "Destination SAARC", yet another important publication of SAARC CCI.

I wish you a safe and happy journey to explore the best of this unique region, South Asia.

Iftikhar Ali Malik



SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION (SAARC)

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established with the signing of the SAARC Charter in Dhaka on December 8, 1985. SAARC comprises of eight Member States: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The Secretariat of the Association was set up in Kathmandu, Nepal, on January 17, 1987.

The objectives of the Association as outlined in the SAARC Charter are: to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life; to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to provide all individuals with the opportunity to live in dignity and to realize their full potentials; to promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia; to contribute to mutual trust, to promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields; to strengthen cooperation with other developing countries; to strengthen cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interests; and to cooperate with international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes.

The social and economic disparities amongst the SAARC member states along with different levels of development, including administrative procedures and policies, urged effective means of economic cooperation. Accordingly, the first SAARC summit in Dhaka (1985) primarily focused on regional cooperation in areas such as health, population activities, child welfare, culture and sports.

Since 1985, eighteen SAARC Summits have hitherto been held in SAARC member countries where the respective heads of state met with a common vision to achieve regional economic cooperation which would ensure a better future for the peoples of South Asia.



SAARC CCI:

SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAARC CCI) is the Apex Body of SAARC. It was established in 1992 with a vision to improve the business environment, policy advocacy for regional economic integration and to foster joint economic ventures across the region. With its Permanent Headquarters based in Islamabad, Pakistan, SAARC CCI has been striving for economic integration and socioeconomic development of South Asia.

The SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry is a constellation of the apex business organizations of eight SAARC member nations, which include, the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment, Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Maldives National Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Federation of Commerce and Industry, Federation of Commerce and Industry, Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Federation of Commerce and Industry of Sri Lanka. Subsequently, the Confederation of Indian Industry joined SAARC CCI as the institutional Member.

SAARC CCI has been advocating for liberal and open South Asian economies, easing off the trade barriers across the region, entrepreneurship development specifically for women entrepreneurs, young entrepreneurs, and startups, e-commerce and digital economy, and for enhancing regional cooperation in the South Asian region.

The constitution of SAARC CCI designates Pakistan as the Permanent Secretariat of SAARC CCI with a Secretary-General as the Chief Executive Officer of the Secretariat.

Objectives:

- To encourage Trade, Services, Industry, Small & Medium Enterprises, Agriculture, Intra-regional Trade through creating strong business linkages amongst the entrepreneurs of the region of South Asia.
- To make recommendations to safeguard the economic and business interests of the SAARC.
- To serve as a consultative body of the Private Sector of the region to provide input and feedback on regional economic issues.
- To encourage Member Countries to accord preferential terms of trade to each other and finally strive towards the gradual realization of the SAARC Economic and Monetary Union.
- To promote the exchange of commercial, technical, industrial management and scientific information, education and know-how amongst its members.
- To collate, collect and disseminate statistical data and joint research and development among the SAARC Member Countries.

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THE LAND OF AUDACITY SHINES TO ETERNITY



ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF



Live happy, live free, live and prosper! With eyes full of hope, smiles full of friendliness and hearts full of faith, people of Afghanistan continue to strive for eternal happiness and boundless prosperity. The glimmering golden sands of the desert, kissed by the glorious sun, spreads to infinity creating designs on the sands along with strange rhythmic winds. Majestic mountains, mingled with plains and proud rivers, rise to heaven above the clouds. Cultural legacy, fused with sagas of ancient worriers, dignify the land of grace and faith. Despite the hardships, the remarkable hospitality of this beautiful land invites the explorers to experience the majestic charm of Afghanistan.



JOURNEY THROUGH AFGHANISTAN

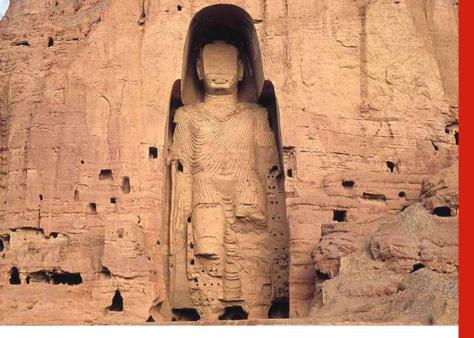
Official Name	Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Government	Unitary Presidential Islamic Republic
Capital	Kabul
Area	652,864 km² (249,935 sq. mi)
Population	37.17 Million (World Bank 2018)
Religions	Islam (99.7%) Others (0.3%)
Languages	Dari / Afghan Persian (Official) Pashtu (Official)
Literacy Rate	43.02% (2018 Est.)
Currency	Afghani (AFN)
Time Zone	GMT +4:30 Hours
Electricity	Standard Voltage - 220 V Frequency - 50 Hz



GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW

Afghanistan is a mountainous, landlocked country located at the crossroads of Asia, sitting astride the hinterland between Western Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, and East Asia. Due to this geographically significant position, Afghanistan is referred as the Heart of Asia where the country had played a pivotal role during the ancient major trade routes known as the Silk Road.

Afghanistan imparts the longest outskirts to Pakistan toward the east and south followed by Iran toward the west, Turkmenistan toward the northwest, Uzbekistan toward the north, Tajikistan toward the upper east and China toward the east. Afghanistan is partitioned into 34 provinces and 398 districts. Afghanistan is divided by the Hindu Kush Mountains running across the country making up the central highlands, these mountains are also part of the Himalayas. The nation has to a great extent parched atmosphere with sweltering, dry summers and cold winters with elevated levels of snowfall, especially in the central highlands.



HISTORICAL BACKDROP

Afghanistan has been a hub of diverse cultures, prompting one historian to dub it as the roundabout of the ancient world. Those who settled included the Persians, under Darius the Great (522-486 BCE); and the Greeks, led by Alexander the Great (356-323 BCE). Many present-day towns are built on Greek foundations. The Buddhist civilization flourished from the late first century CE, its kings reigned in Bamiyan until the end of the 10th century. An Arab raid on Kandahar in 699-700 brought Islam, strengthened as the Turks gained power in Iran, Afghanistan and India. The Mongolian Genghis Khan invaded Afghanistan in the 13th century.

In 1747, Ahmad Shah Durrani unified the Pashtun tribes and created the Durrani Empire, which is considered the beginning of modern Afghanistan. In the late 19th century, Afghanistan became a buffer state between the British Indian Empire and the Russian Empire.

From the 1930s to the 1970s, Afghanistan experienced the status of a national government and Kabul was known as the "Paris of Central Asia." A brief foray into democracy ended in a coup in 1973 and a Communist counter-coup in 1978. The Soviet Union occupied the region in 1979 to support the frail Afghan Communist regime, sparking a long and destructive war till the start of the new millennium.

In December 2004, Hamid Karzai became the first democratically elected president of Afghanistan, thereafter, a National Assembly was inaugurated. Ashraf Ghani serves as the current president of Afghanistan.

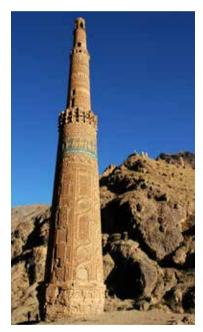
MAJOR ATTRACTIONS OF AFGHANISTAN

Culture: In spite of the cultural and language diversity in Afghanistan, the majority of people experience similar cultural patterns. particularly all Afghans adhere to Islamic traditions. Afghanistan is renowned for making carpets and has been prominent in this industry for centuries. A traditional Afghan rug will have certain prints inspired by the diversity and culture of a particular area, making the rug unique to that part of Afghanistan. Afghans appreciate commending their public occasions with enthusiasm and bringing together family, friends and neighbors in cheerful celebrations.

Architecture: The country conspicuous possesses and architectural eye-catching remnants of all ages, including Greek monuments and Buddhist stupas (shrines or reliquaries) and monasteries, arches, statues, complex Islamic minarets, temples and forts. Amona the most acclaimed sites are the incredible mosques of Herat and Mazar-e Sharif; the minaret of a mosque at Jam in the west central highlands.

Music & Dance: Afghan music is different from Western music. The music of Afghanistan comprises of abundant assortments of old classical music, folk music, and current mainstream music. The folk dance of Afghanistan is called Attan. The performance of the Attan dance in the open air has long been a feature of Afghan life.









Afghans' love for family social events, with music and an abundance of food, is best seen at the numerous festivals which are being once again held throughout the country. The festivals of Afghanistan have always maintained a queer aura about them. Very much close to the root of the national culture and the people, these festivals help the traveller in understanding the country in a different way.

Eid Al-Fitr: Eid Al-Fitr marks the end of the Holy Month of Ramadan. People celebrate this festival with delightful food items, gifts, and social occasions.

Eid e Qurban: It is celebrated on the 10th day of Zilhaj which is the 12th month of the Islamic calendar. It marks the commencing of Haj (Muslim pilgrimage) and animals like sheep, goats or camels are sacrificed for feast on this day.

Mawleed Al-Nabi: This day holds great religious significance as Muslims all over the world celebrate Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) birthday on 12th day of Rabi-ul -Awal month, in Islamic Calendar. The Afghan celebrate the day with zeal and zest, they offer prayers and attend religious gatherings.





Jeshyn Afghan day: The Independence Day of Afghanistan is not a typical commemoration of freedom from a colonial power. Instead, this day is celebrated every year on August 19 to observe the Treaty of Rawalpindi which was signed on 1919 between Britain and Afghanistan. The treaty restored complete sovereigntv the country. The presidential address to the nation, the military parade, and a display of country's national costumes are some of the activities that mark the celebrations of the Independence Day.

Nowruz: It is the most popular and well known festival of Afghanistan. The festival Nowruz celebrations generally last more than a week. Nowruz (New Year Festival according to the solar calendar) is celebrated on the first day of spring.

People come together to celebrate Nowruz to promote the values of peace and solidarity both within families, among friends and across communities with great festive spirit and tremendous fanfare. The festival holds cultural shows and dance performances. The food is also an integral part of Nowruz celebrations across the country.

Apple Blossom Festival: This is a regional festival of the Chake-Wardak District in Wardak Province to proclaim the coming of spring season held every year on 23rd April. It is a fun festival that includes musical events and picnics.









WELCOME TO THE MAJESTIC LAND OF ANCIENT LEGACY

Sightseers from all over the world can reach Afghanistan via air and road. However, reaching Afghanistan via air is the most convenient way.

By Air: Kam Air and Ariana Afghan Airlines are Afghanistan's two major carriers. Most flights will show up at Kabul International Airport directly from UAE, Pakistan, Turkey, India, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, China and Russia.

By Road: From Tajikistan- Shir Khan Port connects with Kunduz Province of Afghanistan.

 Uzbekistan- Hayratan Port connects with Mazar-e-sharif Province of Afghanistan.

 Turkmenistan- Torghundi Port connects with Herat province of Afghanistan.

 Iran- Zarange Port connects with Nemroz Province of Afghanistan and Islam Qala Port connects with Herat province of Afghanistan. Pakistan has 8 formal border crossings with Afghanistan, of which Torkham and Chaman – Spin Boldak have international status. The other 6 are bilateral: Arandu (Chitral), Gursal (Bajaur), Nawa Pass (Mohmand), Kharlachi (Kurram), Ghulam Khan (North Waziristan), Angoor Adda (South Waziristan) and Chaman (Balochistan).



ENTRY PROCEDURES & VISA PROCESS

All foreign nationals need a visa to visit Afghanistan. Applicants for an Afghan visa, regardless of the type of visa, are required to obey the laws of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The types of visa include Tourist Visa, Visit Visa, Business Visa, Work Visa, Student Visa, Residence Visa, Official Visa, Upon Arrival Visa, Crew Visa and Transit Visa.

Tourist Visa (TV) is issued to foreign nationals who are interested in visiting Afghanistan individually or with a group for the purpose of visiting natural, tourist and historic sites or their relatives. TV is issued by the Afghan Missions abroad. The validity of TV is for ninety (90) days and the period of stay would be for thirty (30) days, which can be extended by the Ministry of Interior Affairs of Afghanistan with the consent of the Afghan Tourism Department.

Visa Fees:

- Single Entry Tourist Visa, 30 Days (One Month): 80 USD
- Visiting Single Entry Visa, 30 Days (One Month): 80 USD
- Entry Visa Work, 30 Days (One Month): 100 USD
- Single Entry Visa, 30 Days (One Month): 100 USD
- Single Entry Business, 30 Days (One Month): 40 USD
- Multiple Business Entry Visa, 90 Days (Three Months) 180 Days (Six Months): 80.USD
- Multiple Business Entry Visa, 365 Days (1 Year): 160 USD
- Diplomats, Officials and UN Passport holders: free of charge
- India and Pakistan passport holders: free of charge
- US Passport holders have different fee structure (Generally 160 USD Visa Fee for US Passport holders)
- Visa within 24 Hours: 1.5X of the regular fee

More details on visa processes and up-to-date fee structures can be obtained from the Embassy of Afghanistan in your country.

AIRPORT INFORMATION

Hamid Karzai International Airport is located 16 kilometers (9.9 miles) from the city of Kabul in Afghanistan. It serves as the nation's main international airport capable of housing over one hundred aircrafts. Previously known as the Kabul International Airport, it was renamed in 2014 after former Afghan President Hamid Karzai.

Ahmad Shah Baba International Airport is located 17 kilometers (10 miles) Southeast of Kandahar City in Afghanistan. It serves as the nation's second main international airport and was built between 1956 - 1962. The Airport's previous name was Kandahar Airport. In 2019, the Airport was renamed as Ahmad Shah Baba Abdali International airport by the President of Afghanistan Mohammad Ashraf Ghani.

Herat International Airport is located 10.5 km (6.5 miles) Southeast of the city of Herat in Western Afghanistan. It is Afghanistan's third largest commercial airport after Hamid Karzai International Airport, and Kandahar International Airport.

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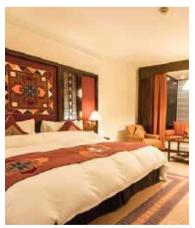
TRAVELLERS' ESSENTIALS



Accommodation: Lodging in Afghanistan has mixed options including vurts, guesthouses. hotels and the basic chaikhana (teahouse). Most hotels have wireless internet access. Guesthouses are generally less expensive than hotels because fewer amenities are offered and guests usually share bathrooms.

If tourists venturing off the beaten track, then a stay at chaikhana, where tourists bed down on the floor of a communal room, may be the only option.

It is not socially acceptable for female travellers to sleep communally, but women might be able to get an attached private room.



Getting Around: The usual way to travel between cities in Afghanistan is by flight however, there are public buses, shared taxis and private taxis between most cities. Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif, Herat and Kandahar are all connected via daily flights. **By Air:** Ariana Afghan Airways flies to Kandahar and Herat. Kam Air flies to Mazar-i-Sharif, Herat, Kandahar, and Bamiyan. Note that not all destinations are listed on the airline's respective websites.

Minibuses: Buses are cheap, and routes operate to most destinations.



Taxis: Depending on the distance, destination, and tourists' bargaining skills, taxi fares range from cheap to expensive and roam around Kabul during the day. Shared taxis are also in plentiful supply and are faster but more expensive than minibuses. Tourists can see many yellow taxis around Afghanistan, particularly in cities. Taxis almost never have meters, so agree to a price before departing. It is highly recommended to hire a well-qualified professional guide for travelling within Afghanistan.

Climate: Summers are viciously with warm temperatures uр to 40°C and with dust storms. Winters can be brutal, and snow is normal. renderina certain territories off-limits. The best time is to go in autumn or spring when the weather is milder. In spring the northern scene is changed as desert offers approach to green fields and blossoms. Harvest time is dry with a wealth of organic products.

What to wear: Dressing in the local clothing styles is the best option when in Afghanistan.

It is recommended to wear Afghan traditional dresses such as Shalwar Kameez. Women in Afghanistan must dress according to Islamic modest dress. You should wear long sleeve tops of mid-thigh level length paired with full length trousers. Loose, floor length, long sleeve dressed are acceptable as well.





Health Requirement: A yellow fever vaccination authentication travellers is mandatory from comina from infected areas. Clinical consideration is restricted. Doctors and hospitals request prompt money instalment for most administrations. Medical insurance. covering emergency evacuation is essential. International aid groups operate in certain urban areas and towns. It is advisable to have a negative COVID-19 PCR test report before travelling to Afghanistan because most airlines check travellers for PCR test reports before allowing them to board the flight. In future, the vaccination of COVID-19 would be a prerequisite for travellers entering Afghanistan. Up-to-date information can be obtained from the Passport Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior, Afghanistan.

Currency: Afghani (AFN) = 100 puls. Notes are in denominations of AFN 1,000, 500, 100, 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1. US dollars are widely accepted.

ATM & Credit Cards: There are a few ATMs in Kabul that regulate US Dollars and Afghani money. Banks are closed on Fridays and travelers' cheques are not generally acknowledged and it can take a fortnight for them to clear. Credit cards are almost redundant everywhere except a handful of hotels and travel agents.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Events

- Nowruz
- Farmer Day
- Labour Day
- The martyrdom day of the national Hero of Afghanistan Ahmad Shah Massoud
- Victory Day of Afghanistan
- Independence Day of Afghanistan

Subject to change:

Holidays for Muslim festivals are subject to appearance of the moon in accordance with the Islamic Calendar.

- Eid-ul-Azha
- Eid-UL-Fitr
- Eid Milad-un-Nabi (S.A.W)
- Ashura

Working hours:

Government Offices

Saturday to Sunday Thursdays Friday is a holiday

Banks

Saturday to Sunday Thursdays 10 Moharram

(08:00 AM to 04:00 PM) (8:00 AM to 04:00 PM)

(08:00 AM to 04:30 PM) (8:00 AM to 01:30 PM)

Date & Month

March 21 March 21 May 1

September 9 April 28 August 19

10 Zil Hai

1 Shawal 12 Rabi ul Awal

WHERE TO GO IN AFGHANISTAN?

EXPLORE THE LAND OF CULTURAL LEGACY & NATURAL BEAUTY

Afghanistan's location at the crossroads of great civilizations in history has created a remarkable diversity in art, architecture, language, traditions, and food. This diverse beauty is demonstrated in each city of Afghanistan.

Kabul: The capital of Afghanistan is considered the fastest growing city in the world. More than 5 Million people call the Afghan capital their home and the city is growing at an incredible pace. Kabul was once a cultural center of many civilization of the world i.e. Zoroastrianism and Buddhism. Today, Kabul treasure of cultural and spiritual heritage stands at a crossroads. You may explore following tourist sites in Kabul.

National Museum: The National Museum is a two-story building located 9 km southwest of the center of Kabul in Afghanistan. The museum's collection has been one of the most important in Central Asia with over 100,000 items dating back several millennia, including items from Persian, Buddhist and Islamic dynasties.

Shah-e Doh Shamshira Mosque: Also called Mosque of the King of Two Swords, is a yellow two story mosque in Kabul, Afghanistan (District 2) on Andarabi Road, just off the Kabul River and the Shah-Do Shamshira bridge in the center of the city. It was built during the reign of Amanullah Khan (1919-1929). It was modeled after the Ortaköv Mosque in Istanbul. The design of this mosque is quite unusual for Islamic religious architecture. Its



Italian decorative stucco creates an interesting effect that some describe as Afghan Baroque.

Qargha Lake: Qargha Lake is located nine kilometers from Kabul City. The area is surrounded by green hills. This is one of the best place for sightseeing and entertainment especially for families. Qargha attracts hundreds of local and foreign tourists. It lies near to the Paghman valley in the lap of green hills.

Darul Aman Palace: Construction of the Darul Aman Palace began in the early 1920's as a part of the endeavours of King Amanullah Khan to modernize Afghanistan. It was to be part of the new capital city called Darulaman, connected to Kabul by a narrow gauge railway. Amanullah Khan invited 22 architects from Germany and France to build the



palace. The palace is considered to be a testimony of the Afghan-German ties, as it was designed by German engineer Walter Harten and his team of engineers.

Babur's Gardens: Laid out by the Mughal ruler Babur in the early 16th century, these gardens are the loveliest spot in Kabul. At 11 hectares, they are also the largest public green space in the city. The garden was laid out in the classical charbagh (four garden) pattern, with a series of quartered rising terraces split by a central watercourse. The garden is thought to have been developed around 1528, when Babur gave orders for the construction of an "avenue garden" in Kabul, described in some detail in his memoirs. the Baburnama. Above this there's a delicate white marble mosque built in 1647 by Shah Jahan, who commissioned the Taj Mahal.

Abdul Rahman Mosque: The Abdul Rahman Mosque, also known as the Grand Mosque of Kabul, is one of the largest mosques in Afghanistan. It is located in Kabul's central commercial areas called Deh Afghanan. The mosque has the capacity to serve 10,000 people at a time. There is also a madrasa inside the mosque and a library containing 150,000 books.

Eid Gah Mosque: Eid Gah Mosque is the second largest mosque in Kabul. It is considered the cardinal religious mosque in the country, where a million of people offer Eid prayers twice a year. It is located near the Mahmud Khan bridge and National Stadium in the Eastern part of the city, in the Shar-e-barq of Kabul, which is one of the wealthier areas of the city.

Kandahar: The revered home of the Mosque of the Sacred Cloak and a city steeped in history, Kandahar sits at the crossroads where Southern Afghanistan meets the mountains of the country's heartland. The traditional seat of Pashtun power, it was the capital of the last Afghan empire during the years of Ahmad Shah Durrani.

Today, the place is filled with mosques, shrines, and mausoleums to luminaries from the national past, and folk come to see the curious inscriptions of the great Mughal invader Babur on the Chilzina View, located just on the edges of the city. Jalalabad: Founded like so many other cities in these parts by the emperor Akbar, Jalalabad is a place where the passage of ancient time is virtually visible. Closer to the city and the climate allows for citrus orchards and green parks something Jalalabad is known for. You can also see the mausoleum of King Amanullah Khan, join the locals for hotly-contested cricket game, or just enjoy the manicured parks and gardens.

Herat: It's easy to see why Herat the third-largest city in Afghanistan has such a Persian flavor to it. The town sits just a stone's throw from the Iranian border, and it was once the home of the Timurid dynasty. The great pièce de résistance of the city is The Friday Mosque. This elegant structure of turquoisetipped minarets and shimmering tiles is sure to wow the senses, which thought to be more than eight centuries old! There's also the Herat Citadel to see, and the tombs of revered Sufi poets.



Band-e Amir National Park: The breathtaking reaches of the Band-e Amir became home to the first ever national park in Afghanistan back in 2009. The name "Bande-Amir" means "the king's dam". These are five naturally formed lakes which are a result of constant deposition of minerals by the spring waters at the mouth of the lake. Natural dams are formed because of which the level of lake waters has risen. Its beauty lies in the fact that every lake has a different tone of blue than the other which creates a contrast the red cliffs that with barren seem to be surrounding the lake waters.

The most visited lake is Band-i-Haibat, which means, the lake of wonder. Its deep blue color entices the visitor to swim. However, please note that the water is ice-cold, and the waterfalls are actually covered in icicles most of the year. Still a visit to the lakes is one of the highlights for most visitors to Afghanistan.

Cross the Salang Pass: The Salang Pass connects Kabul to northern Afghanistan. Crossing the Hindu Kush at almost 4000 meters. it is one of the most scenic and adventurous drives in Afghanistan. It has been in use as a trade route between central Afghanistan and the northern region known historically as Bactria for at least four thousand years. It used to be the highest tunnel in the world until 1973



Afghanistan's Blue Mosque: The Blue Mosque offers a tranquil escape from the hustle and bustle of Mazar-e-Sharif's streets and bazaars. It is consistently quiet, except for when the muezzin makes one of the daily calls for prayer. The most prominent city landmark, Blue Mosque amazes visitors with its turquoise domes and elegant Persian-style tile work, built in the 15th century.

Bamiyan Buddhas: The empty niches of the Buddha statues dominate the Bamiyan valley. Seven hours by car and one hour by plane from Kabul, this beautiful valley is undoubtedly one of Afghanistan's foremost attractions. It lies about 80 miles (130 km) northwest of Kabul, the country's capital, in the Bamiyan valley, at an elevation of 8,495 feet (2,590 metres). The Buddhas of Bamiyan were carved out of a cliff face in Afghanistan 1,400 years ago, and these vast creations, towering over their remote mountain valley, had amazed and mystified countless visitors ever since.

Panjshir: Carving its way into the foothills of the Hindu Kush from the eastern provinces of Afghanistan, the Panjshir Valley is tipped to become one of the newfound industrial powerhouses of the nation. With investment taking the lead, talk of everything from emerald mining to hydroelectric generation is being floated for these parts. However, for the time being, Panjshir remains the glorious medley of snow-topped mountains and winding rivers, verdant fields, and rustic hamlets.



Minaret of Jam: The Minaret of Jam is an unparalleled masterpiece of architectural creativity, intricate decorations and structural engineering in the history of mankind. Situated in the district of Shahrak in the Ghor Province in western Afghanistan, the Minaret of Jam has been rising at the bank of picturesque Hari River surrounded by a spectacular range of mountains up to 2400 metres in height.

The 65 meters (210 ft) high minaret, surrounded by mountains had been built entirely of baked-bricks. The minaret is one of the finest examples of magnificent architecture and art of the Ghurid Period (1000-1220). Also known as victory tower, it exhibits the Kufic and Naskhi calligraphy, geometric patterns, and verses from the Holy Qur'an. UNESCO has designated the Minaret of Jam a World Heritage Site.

THINGS TO DO IN AFGHANISTAN

Traditional Afghani Cuisine: When you are in Kabul, don't forget to enjoy Afghan cuisine, more sophisticated than kebabs and rice. This landlocked country has been at the junction of major civilizations for centuries and that is reflected in what is on the menu. Sample its delicate Ashak, a ravioli stuffed with leeks, and topped with minced meat & yogurt, or Mantu pasta filled with lamb & onions, and new influences are still emerging as Afghanistan opens its doors to the world.

Don't miss out the Afghans traditional tea right after the dinner. A common tea served in Afghanistan is called Kehwa. It is a blend of green tea, cardamom, cinnamon bark, and saffron strands. It may also include peppercorns, ginger and almonds.

Maior dine outs in Kabul 1' includes: atmosphere Restaurant (French cuisine). Phone: 070-224982. Dehli Darbar Restaurant (Indian cuisine) Phone : 0799-324899, Popolano Restaurant (French cuisine) Phone: 070-288116. Lai Thai Restaurant (Thai cuisine), Phone: 070-297557, B's Place Restaurant (Italian and Mexican cuisine). Phone: 070-276416. Elbowroom Restaurant (Continental/Europe cuisine). Phone: 070-254432. Istanbul (Turkish Restaurant cuisine), Phone: 070-200116, Golden Key Seafood Restaurant (Chinese

cuisine), Phone 1: 0799-002800, Flower Street Café/Restaurant (Californian cuisine) Phone : 070293124









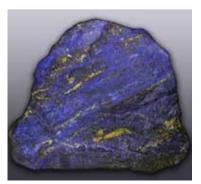


Buzkashi game: Football? Basketball? Volleyball? No, the national game of Afghanistan is Buzkashi! Never heard of it? Don't worry, the game involve lots of men on horseback and one dead goat. To score a point, you must grab the dead goat on your horse and carry it into the other team's territory. Drawing thousands of fans, the games are like nothing you've seen before with its fierce and electric atmosphere. The second most popular sport is Football followed by Cricket.

SHOPPING

What To Buy? Afghanistan offers the visitor a rich selection of handicrafts. Luxurious Afghan carpets, karakul coats, fur overcoats, embroidered material, caps, and hand-woven silk fabrics and antiques are some of the items that tempt the traveler to lighten his or her wallet. Gemstones are also a major commodity. However, travelers are urged to be cautious when purchasing items of questionable origin. Exportation of antiques requires authorization from the appropriate authorities.





While there are many places for visitors to shop in Afghanistan, Kocha-e-Murgha, or Chicken Street is the most famous and historic. Boutiques carry postcards, maps, ashtrays and boxes made of the famous Afghan blue stone-Lapis Lazuli, antique musical instruments, and hand-made Afghan carpets. The carpets' designs, colors and materials sometimes wool, silk or a mix, are unique and quite remarkable.

Dried Fruits: Do not forget to buy good stock of dry fruits from Afghanistan. Afghanistan boasts a vast array of high quality and organic dried fruits. The selection of Afghan dried fruits includes raisins, apricots, figs, cherries, prunes, dates, and mulberries. The process of drying fruits is a family business that has been passed down from one generation to another for many years.

People typically dry their fruit in an entirely natural way either in the sun or, as it is the case with certain varieties of grapes, in unique 'raisin rooms' known as khasmish khana. Considered a key producer and supplier of various dried fruits in the world, Afghanistan exports its dry fruit produce to numerous countries around the world.





Afghanistan Fresh Fruits: Afghanistan's fruits are second to none in flavor. Renowned for its epic countryside and rugged mountains, it is also known for its variety of fresh fruits. Afghanistan produces exceptionally high quality organic fruits such as watermelons, grapes, pomegranates, peaches, apples, pears, mulberries, figs, persimmons, apricots, and plums are also country's major food exports.



World Best Saffron Produced in Afghanistan: One of the reasons to go to Afghanistan is to buy the best quality saffron which is cultivated and produced in Afghanistan. Saffron is one of the most precious spices in the world, retailing for more than \$500 an ounce. Saffron is cultivated in more



than 7 provinces regularly, a total area of around 250 hectares. It has been linked to abundant health benefits.

Istalif Blue Pottery & Ceramics:

Blue pottery & ceramics made stuff from Istalif district in Koh Daman valley, are incredibly beautiful and attractive. Their stunning shapes and exciting colors are massively eye-catching, whereas the most distinctive characteristic of Istalifi ceramics is the special turquoise glaze that is applied to the finished pieces. The ceramics are in natural, earthy colors with highlights in vibrant red and blue.

in Afghanistan stores stocks an assortment of snacks from around the world: fruit juice from Uzbekistan, jam from Pakistan, bottled water from Italy, cheese from Austria, and cereal from the United States, Since Chicken Street is the main tourist market in the capital, you will likely be asked a higher price, especially if you are not with a local guide. Remember that bargaining is part of the experience!





SOME DO'S AND DON'TS TO BE CONSIDERED (SAFETY GUIDELINES)

- Handshaking is not encouraged in Afghanistan especially with opposite sex. To greet someone, put your right hand on your heart and say "Assalaam-Allaikum".
- It's easy for Afghans to identify non-Afghans and give them crazy prices. Use your bargaining skills for everything, including taxi fares and hotel prices.
- Tipping is neither mandatory nor expected. However, it is always very much appreciated.
- If you are visiting Afghans in their homes or going to a mosque, take off your shoes on the rugs. You are not supposed to walk with shoes where they pray.
- Your health insurance won't be useful in most parts of Afghanistan, they all accept only cash, so be prepared accordingly.
- We recommend you keep your passport safe and always close to you.
 Make some copies both black and white and color to give to the hotels and airports when needed.
- Be cautious when taking photographs. It is unlawful to photo checkpoints, and security or military locations. Solicit consent before taking photographs from individuals.
- Malaria episodes, including chloroquine-resistant strains, can arise between April and September. Consider taking anti-malarial medication.
- Polio is across the board. Before you travel, ensure your polio immunizations are up to date. Carry proof of vaccination if you are staying longer than 4 weeks.
- Don't look for pork-based foods nor tell Afghans what they are missing by not eating pork.
- Alcohol is illegal in Afghanistan, if you caught with it, you can end up in an Afghan jail, so don't experience it.
- Keep electronic devices charged in remote areas, WiFi is open at various lodgings in Afghanistan, however, the speed and nature of your internet experience can vary extensively.
- During the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, abstain from eating, drinking and smoking out in the open.



IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Deputy Office of Visa of Consular Affairs - Ministry of Foreign Affairs Afghanistan Tel: 0093202107408 | Email: visa@econsulate.gov.af Web: www.econsulate.gov.af/en/visa/visa-services-of-the-islamicrepublic-of-afghanistan.html

Consular Affairs Division - Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Malek Asghar Square, Kabul, Afghanistan | Tel: 0093202107408 info@econsulate.gov.af | Website: https://www.econsulate.gov.af/en/

Afghanistan Customs Department - Ministry of Finance

Jalalabad Main Road, Kabul, Afghanistan Tel: 0093 780343500 / 0093 202320282 Email: tamas@mof.gov.af Website: https://customs.mof.gov.af/#home

Directorate of Transport Kandahar, Afghanistan | Tel: 0093-700000028 / 0093-700300683

Emergency & Important Hotlines Police - 119 / 102 | Fire - 101 | Ambulance - 103 / 112

Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior, Afghanistan (Phone: +93 (0) 20 220 1758 | Email: info@moi.gov.af Web: https://moi.gov.af/en/passport)



Dates & Dry Dates (Export & Import)



PRIEM CHAND

Shop# 8, Agha Qadirdad Agriculture Market, Sukkur. Ph: 0092 71 5804028, Cell: 0092 808 8748384 E-mail: vbangeja@gmail.com



BANGLADESH



Glamorous with glistening rivers, beauteous with lush hills that reflect many shades of green, bountiful with flora and fauna, and proud with a rich culture, she is indeed the jewel in South Asia that smiles through the sunlight and soothing breeze blown from the heaven. The natural water highways of this elegant land of bewitching rivers create the fascinating experience of travelling by boats giving a unique opportunity to witness the country from an artistic angle. Green hills filled with beautiful secrets, monsoon mists over the delta and shimmering waters of life invite travelers to explore the beauty of Bangladesh.



JOURNEY THROUGH BANGLADESH

Official Name	People's Republic of Bangladesh
Government	Parliamentary
Capital	Dhaka
Area	1,48,460 km²
Population	161.36 Million (World Bank 2018)
Religions	Islam (89.5 %) Hinduism (8.5 %) Buddhism (0.6 %) Christianity (0.4 %)
Language	Bangla (Official)
Literacy Rate	73.2 % (2018 Est.)
Currency	Taka
Time Zone	GMT+6 Hours
Electricity	Standard Voltage - 220 V Standard Frequency - 50 Hz

GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW

Bangladesh is the country with a population exceeding 164.6 million, inhabited in an area of 148,460 square kilometers (57,320 sq mi), making it one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Bangladesh shares land borders with India to the west, north, and east, Myanmar to the southeast, and the Bay of Bengal to the south. It is narrowly separated from Nepal and Bhutan by the Siliguri Corridor and from China by Sikkim, in the north, respectively. Dhaka, the capital and largest city, is the nation's economic, political, and cultural hub. Chittagong, with the largest seaport, is the second-largest city.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Remnants of civilization in the greater Bengal region date back four thousand years, when the region was settled by Dravidian, Tibeto-Burman, and Austroasiatic peoples. The Kingdom of Gangaridai was founded as early as in the seventh century BC, which later merged with Bihar under the Magadha, Nanda, Mauryan and Sunga Empires. Bengal was later part of the Gupta Empire and the Harsha Empire from the third to the sixth centuries AD. Following its collapse, a dynamic Bangalee named Shashanka founded an impressive yet shortlived kingdom. Shashanka is considered the first independent king in the history of Bangladesh. After a period of anarchy, the Buddhist Pala dynasty ruled the region for four hundred years commonly referred to as the "Golden Age of Bengal". This was followed by a shorter reign of the Hindu Sena dynasty.

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Islam was introduced to Bengal in the 12th century by Arab Muslim merchants and Sufi missionaries, and subsequent Muslim conquests helped spread it throughout the region. By the 16th century, the Mughal Empire controlled Bengal, and Dhaka became an important provincial centre of the Mughal administration.

European traders arrived late in the 15th century, and their influence grew until the British East India Company gained control of Bengal following the Battle of Palashi in 1757. The bloody rebellion of 1857, known as the Sepoy Mutiny, resulted in the transfer of authority to the Crown, with a British viceroy running the administration in British India. Between 1905 and 1911, an abortive attempt was made to divide the province of Bengal into two zones, with Dhaka as the capital of the eastern zone.

When India was partitioned in 1947, Bengal was partitioned again; this time along religious lines. With the western part going to India and the eastern part joining Pakistan as province called East Bengal (later renamed East Pakistan), with its capital in Dhaka. Dissatisfaction in the East continued to rise through the 1950s and 1960s, during which the Awami League emerged as the political voice of the Bangalees under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and eventually resulted in the emergence of Bangladesh as a sovereign and independent nation on 16 December 1971. The constituent assembly adopted the constitution of Bangladesh on 4 November 1972, establishing a secular, multiparty parliamentary democracy. Bangladesh is the only country in the world that was created on the basis of language and ethnicity.

MAJOR ATTRACTIONS OF BANGLADESH

Arts and Paintings: Bangladesh invests wholeheartedly its magnificent tradition of art and literature. It is viewed as a significant reservoir of cultural personae and unique folk heritage. The tradition of painting started for religious purpose in Hindu temples and Viharas. Zainul Abedin, who got acclaimed for his compositions on the Bengal famine of 1943, is considered as the father of the modern art movement in Bangladesh. Huge numbers of Bangladeshi painters earned an international reputation for their exceptional artistic abilities.

Literature: A collection of lyrical poems composed by the Buddhist Monks known as 'Charjapada' is believed to be the earliest specimen of Bengali literature. During the mediaeval period, Bengali literature grew impressively with the support of Muslim rulers. The era of modern Bengali literature began in the late 19th century, in which the Nobel Rabindranath Laureate Tagore played a pioneer role. Kazi Nazrul Islam, Michael Madhusudan Datta, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhava. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhaya, and numerous other succeeding scholars of extraordinary caliber have immense contributions in the enriched modern Bengali literature.

Music and Dance: The folk music in Bangladesh shares the perceptions of that of the Indian sub-continent. Bangladeshi music can be divided into three categories i.e classical, folk and modern. Baul music is one of



Bangladesh's and India's most fascinating musical genres. The traditional dances of Bangladesh are simple, spontaneous and are passed down from one generation to another. The main folk dances performed in Bangladesh are Dhali Dance, Dak Dance, Fakir Dance, Puppet Dance, Chhokra Dance and Ghatu Dance.

Drama and Film: The theatre in Bangladesh is believed to have its origin in the 4th century AD in the form of Sanskrit drama. In the present day theatre of Bangladesh, the impact of European theater and indigenous people's culture exceptionally noticeable. theatre culture has great The prominence in history as well as in daily lives of Bangladeshis. The Bangladeshi entertainment is the second biaaest entertainment world in South Asia after Bollywood (India) and is the ninth-biggest in Asia in terms of revenue.

FLORA & FAUNA

Bangladesh has six seasons in a vear. summer (mid-April to mid-June). Monsoon (mid-June to mid-August), autumn (mid-August to mid-October), late autumn (mid-October to mid-December), winter (Mid-December to mid-February). and spring (mid-February to mid-April). Each season produces its special variety of flowers. Among them are water lily, rose, hibiscus, bougainvillea, magnolia, and an incredible diversity of wild orchids in the forested areas. The Eastern zone, consisting of parts of the Sylhet and Chittagong areas, has many low hills covered with jungles of bamboo. The villages are usually full of groves of Mango, Banana, Jack-fruit. Coconut. Palm. Bamboo. and other useful trees.

The largest forest is the Sundarban which stretches across the Southwestern seaboard, providing sanctuary to the famous Royal Bengal Tiger. Six types of deer are found in the hill tracts and the Sundarbans. The spotted deer, barking deer and sambar are the most familiar. Clouded leopard, leopard cat, mongoose, jackal and rhesus monkey also contribute to the biodiversity. Birds such as bulbuls, magpie-robins, and a wide variety of warblers further add to the beauty of the land. There are about 150 species of reptiles, include the sea turtle, river tortoise, mud turtle, and crocodile.



FESTIVALS AND CELEBRATIONS

Bangladesh is a land of festivity. The nation celebrates faith, life, liberty, nature, elation, and achievements round the year through a wide variety of fairs and festivals, organized with enthusiasm and intricate details. Festivals in Bangladesh fall into four major categories: religious, national, cultural and tribal festivals.

Eid ul-Fitr: The biggest Muslim festival observed throughout the world. This is held on the day following the Ramadan or the month of fasting.

Like other Muslim countries, big congregations are held at the Eidgahs (open fields) and mosques in the morning and people dressed in new clothes, visit each other and exchange greetings.

Eid ul-Adha: lt is another important religious festival of the Muslims in Bangladesh and elsewhere. Animals are sacrificed commemorate the historic to sacrifice of Hazrat Ibrahim (AS), which symbolized utmost loyalty and complete submission to Allah. Eid-ul-Adha is usually observed on the 10th day of Arabic lunar calendar month of Zilhaj. Eid congregations are held throughout the country.



Basanta Utsab: The festival marks the joyous arrival of spring, celebrated in a very colourful manner throughout the country on the 1st day of Falgun, the 11th month of the Bangla calendar, which falls in mid-February of the Gregorian calendar. On this occasion, Bengali women wear traditional sari's along with jewelry, and colourful fairs and cultural programs are organized.

Pohela Boishakh: It is the first day of the Bengali calendar which falls on 14th April of Gregorian calendar. It is closely linked with the rural life. People. dressed in colourful traditional clothes. visit their friends. relative and neighbours to exchange greetings. On this day, fairs are held where agricultural products. various handicrafts. traditional tovs. cosmetics, as well as various kinds of foods and sweets are sold.

Utsab & Nabanna Poush Mela: The Nabanna Utsab (new harvest festival) is celebrated predominantly by the rural agrarian population of Bangladesh in Poush, the first month of winter season of the Bengali calendar. With a full granary for the winter, it is the time for the agrarian Bengalis to relax and engage in merriment and cultural activities. A traditional Poush Mela (traditional fair) would essentially include a Jatrapala (a traditional theatre), traditional dance and music concerts, along with a wide variety of rice-milkmolasses based delicacies called pitha.

Baul Mela: Every year, in the month of Falgun (February to March), "Lalon Smaran Utshab" (Lalon memorial festival) is held in the shrine of Lalon in Kushtia. During the festival, folk singers (Bauls) and devotees of Lalon from Bangladesh and overseas come to

perform and highlight the mystics of Fakir Lalon Shah, the undisputed king of Baul music. Baul music celebrates celestial love in earthly terms.

Amor Ekushey and the International Mother

Language Day: Amor Ekushey celebrated throughout the country on 21st February each vear to commemorate and pav homage to the language martyrs who sacrificed their lives on 21st February 1952 for the recognition of their mother language, Bangla. To promote the Bangla language and literature. a month-long book fair is organized in Dhaka in February every year. The events of the day include processions, cultural programs, placing of flowers at the Shahid Minar, and prayer at the graves of martyrs.



Independence Day: The nation celebrates its Independence and National Day on 26th March with enthusiasm and patriotic zeal. It commemorates the country's declaration of independence from Pakistan by the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Muijbur Rahman in the late hours of 25th March 1971. Independence Day celebrations include the ceremonial laving of floral wreath at the National Mausoleum at Savar by the Hon'ble President and Hon'ble Prime Minister to pay homage to the valiant freedom fiahters. colourful parades. political speeches, fairs, concerts, and many other public and private events celebrating the history and traditions of Bangladesh.

Durga Puja: It is the biggest festival of the Hindu community in Bangladesh which lasts for ten days. It is celebrated throughout the country in autumn and the entire population gets involved in the grand festivity. People worship Goddess Durga inside temples and the festivities culminate with the idol immersion in the river.

Buddha Purnima: Buddha Purnima, the birth anniversary of Lord Bhuddha, is the most important festival of the Buddhists and is celebrated throughout the country with religious fervour and enthusiasm on the full moon day in the month of April.

Christmas: Christmas, also known as "Bara Din (Big Day)" is celebrated every year throughout Bangladesh with solemnity and enthusiasm. Christmas in Bangladesh starts with singing of carols in churches from the first week of December. Churches, homes, city hotels are decorated with Christmas trees and colourful lightings.



HOW TO GET THERE? Welcome to the Land of Rivers and Lush Greenery

By Air: Bangladesh can be reached by air from virtually any part of the world making the country very accessible to foreigners. The Biman Bangladesh Airlines alone connects Dhaka city with over 15 major cities of the world.

By Train: The Maitree Express train is the modern and fully air-conditioned, international express train service connecting Dhaka in Bangladesh to Kolkata in the Indian state of West Bengal. The Bengali name Maitree Express means Friendship Express when translated to English, denoting the significant contribution of the train service to the friendly relations between India and Bangladesh.

Entry & Visa Formalities:

 a) Valid passport is required for nationals of all countries to visit Bangladesh.

b) Visas are required for nationals of all countries with the following exceptions: Bhutan, Barbados, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cyprus, Fiji, Western Samoa, Tonga, Sierra Leone, Lesotho, Zambia, Tanzania, Grenada, Papua New Guinea, Seychelles, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Jamaica, Mauritius, Malawi, Maldives, Singapore, Switzerland, St. Kitts and Nevis, Ghana and Gabon.

c) No visa required' means that no visa is required for stay in Bangladesh up to 90 days only. For further extension of stay, permission is required. d) European, North American and Australian passport holders of Bangladesh origin do not require a visa, provided they pay US\$ 50 or equivalent and have their passports stamped. Visa can be obtained from the Bangladesh High Commission in respective countries.

e) The Immigration Authority may issue Landing Permit (LP) or Visa on- Arrival (VOA). LP/VOA may be issued for a maximum period of 30 (thirty) days unless otherwise stated and will not be extended under any circumstances (nor extendable).

Restricted Entry: Transit and entry is refused to Israeli passports holders. However, exception is made for Palestinians who hold Israeli passports.

AIRPORT INFORMATION

Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA), Dhaka: This is the largest and the principal international airport of the country. It is situated in the capital city Dhaka. Almost all international passengers embark and disembark from HSIA. More than 90% of aeronautical functions of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh are carried out by HSIA.

Shah Amanat International Airport, Chittagong: This airport is situated in the port city of Chittagong. It is the country's second largest airport and the alternate airport to HSIA.



Osmani International Airport, Sylhet: It is situated at the city of Sylhet, a district at the North-East corner of the country. It has been upgraded to an international airport to facilitate the people of the district which is famous for having a large number of Bengali nationals residing in United Kingdom.

Airport Facilities: For quick immigration, Tourist Reporting Center, Duty-Free and Sim Booths exist in the immigration area. Clearance of tourists at the health, immigration and customs counter is also done expeditiously.

Duty Free and Customs: The following goods may be imported into Bangladesh without incurring customs duty: 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 225g of tobacco; 1 bottle of alcoholic beverages (non-Muslims only); a reasonable amount of perfume; gifts up to the value of Tk500.

Note: Duty-free items may be bought at the duty-free shop at Dhaka Airport on arrival. Prohibited items: Firearms and some animals.

Customs Regulations: There are restrictions on importing currency and weapons. Contact the Embassy/High Commission of Bangladesh in your country for specific information.

TRAVELERS' ESSENTIALS

Best Time to Visit: Bangladesh has а tropical monsoon-type climate, with a hot and rainv summer and a drv winter. January is the coolest month with temperatures averaging near 26 deg C (78 d F) and April the warmest with temperatures from 33 to 36 deg C (91 to 96 deg F). The climate is one of the wettest in the world. Most places receive more than 1.525 mm of rain a year. and areas near the hills receive 5.080 mm. Most rain occurs during the monsoon (June- September) while little happens in winter (November-February).

What to wear? When thinking about what to wear in Bangladesh, lightweight cotton and linen clothing is the best choice because of the heat and humidity. Warm clothes are desirable in the evenings during the cold season.

Accommodation: Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) is the National Tourism Organization of the country. It facilitates the local tourism industry and aims to develop Bangladesh as an exotic tourist destination. BPC operates a number of modern hotels,

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motels and cottages throughout the country. For booking of Parjatan accommodation, you may contact the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation.

Besides PBC operated accommodation, there are private hotels and different government, semi government and departmental rest houses/guest houses which can be hired.

Getting Around: There are eleven operational internal airports located in Dhaka, Barishal, Chattogram, Cumilla, Cox's Bazar, Ishwardi. Jashore. Raishahi. Syedpur, Sylhet and Thakurgaon. Bangladesh Railway provides an efficient transport service to places of interest such as Chattogram, Svlhet. Khulna, Mymensingh, Barishal, Bogura, Rajshahi, Dinajpur starting from Dhaka.

Taxis and Car Rental: It is easy to find taxis in Dhaka, and other large cities like Chittagong. In Dhaka, black or yellow cabs ply the roads and they all have meters, but bargaining is still a must. Since traffic is jammed during peak hours so allow plenty of time to get around. There are many taxi providers in Dhaka, including Anudip Autos Ltd. (+88029342731, 02-9342732), Cosmo Cab (Pvt) Ltd.(+88-02-812-7191) and Navana Taxi Cab Co. Ltd. (+88-02-955-2212).

Health **Requirements:** The WHO recommends the following vaccinations while traveling to Bangladesh: hepatitis A, hepatitis B, typhoid, cholera, yellow fever, Japanese encephalitis, rabies. measles. meningitis, polio. mumps and rubella (MMR), Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis), chickenpox, shingles, pneumonia and influenza.

A Negative COVID-19 PCR Test Report issued by an accredited laboratory within 72 hours prior to landing in Bangladesh is required. There are health screening procedures in place at airports and other ports of entry in Bangladesh. In the future, the vaccination of



COVID-19 would be a prerequisite. Up-to-date information can be obtained from the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Bangladesh. (Web: https://mocat.gov.bd/)

Currency: The currency of Bangladesh is Bangladeshi Taka (BDT) that equals to 100 poisha. Notes are in denominations of Tk 1000, 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1.

Credit cards: Credit cards are widely accepted in Bangladesh.

Working Hours: The working week is from Sunday to Thursday. Offices are open from 9 am to 5 pm (public sector) and from 10 am to 6 pm (private). Banks are open from Sunday to Thursday from 9 am to 5 pm. Shops are open from 10 am to 7 pm, even 8 pm for some shopping centers.

Public Holidays

International Mother Language Day Birthday of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Independence Day Bengali New Year International Labour Day National Mourning Day Victory Day

Subject to Change: Other holidays such as Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist religious festivals are subject to the appearance of the moon, e.g. Eid Milad un Nabi, Eid ul Azha and Eid ul Fitr.

Medical Facilities: Modern and well equipped specialized and general hospitals are available 24 hours a day across Bangladesh. Please check with the Bangladesh Tourism Board (National Tourism Agency) for more details.



February 21

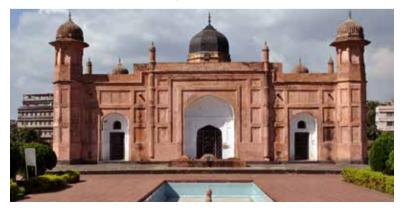
March 17 March 26 April 14 May 1 August 15 December 16

WHERE TO GO IN BANGLADESH?

Bangladesh offers many tourist attractions, including archaeological sites, historical mosques and monuments, the longest natural beach in the world, picturesque landscape, hill forests and wildlife, rolling tea gardens and tribes. Tourists find the rich flora and fauna and colorful tribal life very enchanting. Each part of the country offers distinctly different topography, flavors and food. It is home to the Royal Bengal Tigers, freshwater pink dolphins, historical temples made of red earth.

Lalbagh Fort: One of the finest specimens of the Mughal period is the Aurangabad Fort, commonly known as Lalbagh Fort, which represents the unfulfilled dream of a Mughal Prince. There are fort houses along with number of splendid monuments surrounded by attractive gardens. These include a small 3-domed mosque, the mausoleum of Bibi Pari, the reputed daughter of Nawab Shaista Khan (Mughal governor) and more.

Tourist and visitors will find many interesting places during the visit to Lalbagh Fort and it certainly qualifies as a place of interest and is well worth exploring.



Ahsan Manzil (The Pink Palace): The palace is considered to be one of the most noteworthy architectural monuments Bangladesh. This magnificent building is situated on the banks of the Buriganga River that flows beside Dhaka. Ahsan Manzil was previously the official palace of the Dhaka Nawab family and is currently a museum preserving the culture and history of the area.

Sonargaon - the Old Capital of Bengal: Sonargaon was the capital of the ancient kingdom ruled by Isa Khan of Bengal. Bengal is now divided into west Bengal, which is a state in India and eastern Bengal, which is the nation of Bangladesh. Today, old Sonargaon is home to some of the oldest buildings in Bangladesh. Old Sonargaon is a wonderful city to visit, with so much to offer to tourists and visitors to explore. **Mainamati:** Mainamati in Comilla is one of the finest archaeological camps in Bangladesh covered by many historical ruins. It is the home to the most important Buddhist archaeological sites in the region. The journey will take two-and-ahalf hours time from Dhaka.

National Martyrs' Memorial: The Monument at Savar is one of the most beautiful places Early morning is less to visit. crowded but in the evening it is full of people. It is located at Savar, about 32 km northwest of Dhaka built in memory of the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971. The Monument tower is composed of seven isosceles triangular planes, each varying in size in its height and base. The planes are folded at the middle and placed one after another. The highest point of the structure reaches 150 feet.



Mahasthangarh: It is one of the oldest archaeological sites located at Shibganj Upazila of Boara district. discovered in Bangladesh in the 3rd century B.C. 'Mahasthan' means 'great sanctity' and 'Garh' means fort. It is a vibrant administrative, religious and cultural center that was once the home to Muslims. Hindus, and most importantly Buddhists. Many tourists visit this place to see the glory of Mahasthan.

Khulna: Khulna division, in the southwest of the country, is made up of marshlands dense jungle, and numerous rivers, which once formed natural barriers against invasions from the west and east. Khulna division proudly claims the Sundarbans (Beautiful Forest), an enormous network of waterways through the waterlogged jungle that is a heaven for wildlife. Visiting the monuments and mosques scattered around Bagerhat, District in Khulna division, also make a worthwhile excursion. **Sixty Dome Mosque:** The Sixty Dome Mosque (more commonly known as Shait Gambuj) is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the largest in country from the Sultanate period. It has been described as "the most impressive Muslim monuments in the whole of the Indian subcontinent. It is, nonetheless, worth visiting when exploring the fascinating country of Bangladesh.

St. Martin's Island: St. Martin's Island is a small island (area only 8 km²) in the northeastern part of the Bay of Bengal, about 9 km south of the tip of the Cox's Bazar. St Martin's Island is perfect for visitors who are truly interested in escaping the holds of a modern world. The island is all about the sun, sea, and palm trees. During the day, the island comes alive with water sports, beach parties and bonfires lighting up the evening skies.



Hatirjheel Lake: The Lake is one of the most attractive places in the centre of the capital, Dhaka. Hatirjheel unveils a new horizon in Dhaka in terms of environment and aesthetics. Beautiful bridges. eve-catching fountains, beautiful white stairs have been constructed to move from the lakes to the other side. At evenings, changing lights which illuminate into different colors are displayed, truly making the lake a spectacle. Anyone can visit Hatiriheel at day or night time.

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Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Safari Park: Former Dulahazra Safari Park located 107 kilometers south of Chittagong city in Chakoria Upazila district of Cox's Bazar. The park contains varieties of sub-tropical evergreen and semi evergreen trees and wildlife. A considerable number of people visit the safari park throughout the year because of its wonderful natural scenic beauty and attractive undulated landscape with green coverage. Visitors can see the animals by bus or jeep or on foot.

Bangladesh National Parliament Complex: The National Parliament building is a modern architectural splendor. The construction of the complex began in 1961 but was completed in January 1982. The 200 acres complex, designed by architect Luis Kahn, is one of the largest legislative complexes in the world. The building was featured prominently in the film 'My Architect' detailing the career and legacy of its architect, Luis Kahn. Author Robert McCarter has described the building as one of the most significant buildings of the 20th century.

Kuakata Sea Beach: Kuakata is a panoramic sea beach on the southern most tip of Bangladesh. Located in the Patuakhali district, Kuakata has a wide sandy beach where one can see both the sunrise and sunset. It is about 320 Kilometers south of Dhaka, the capital, and about 70 Kilometers from the district headquarters.

Patenga Beach: Patenga is a popular tourist spot. The beach is very close to the Bangladesh Naval Academy and Shah Amanat International Airport. Its width is narrow and swimming in the seas is not recommended. Since the 1990s, a host of restaurants and kiosks have sprouted out around the beach area. It has also enhanced the security aspect of visiting at night. It has also enhanced the magnificence of the beach at night.

Sylhet: Each and every expanse of Bangladesh abounds in greenery, but none can compare with Sylhet. From spinning hills covered in lush green tea gardens and gleaming paddy fields to olive marshlands and reserved forests, Sylhet seems to have been blessed with every possible shade of green one can imagine. One can enjoy numerous cycling trails via cycling aimlessly in the tea gardens, forests, and villages. Don't forget to shop Monipuri shari, cane goods, and various other things from local shops.



Sundarban: It is the biggest mangrove forest in the world. Sundarban is in South West part of Bangladesh, in the district of greater Khulna. The total area is about 38,000 square kilo meters. Sundarban is a large block of littoral forests. The beauty lies in its unique natural surroundings. The Sundarbans are a part of the world's largest delta formed by the rivers Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna.

Nilgiri in Bandarban: Highlands or to be more specific, hills, have always been among the favourite destinations of travellers. An ideal spots for those who yearn for the distance away from the everyday bustle of life and yet well within the proximity of urbanisation. One such destination is the Nilgiri, an idyllic resort built in the highland of Bandarban, a district in southeastern Bangladesh and a part of the Chittagong Division and Chittagong Hill Tracts. The three highest peaks of Bangladesh-Tahjindong, Mowdok and Keokradong are located in this district.

THINGS TO DO IN BANGLADESH

Traditional Bangladeshi Cuisine: Traditional, authentic Bangladeshi cuisine is made up of a diverse range of delightful spices, herbs, rice, fish, meats and breads. Western food is available in all major hotels and most of the big restaurants in main cities but local dishes are normally far better and more exotic. From high-end restaurants to cozy cafes, food lovers vacationing in Bangladesh will be charmed by its wide-ranging and vibrant eatery scene. Some of the famous dishes includes:





- Ilish macher paturi
- Fuchka
- Chingri Malai Curry
- Beguni

- Shorshe Ilish
- Bhorta
- Chotpoti
- Kachchi Biryani



- Morog Polao
- Bhuna Khichuri
- Patla Khichuri

Desserts: Misti Doi is a traditional Bengali sweet steamed yogurt. It is a classic sweet that governs the dessert industry of Bengal along with the millions of other sweets such as Chomchom, Jilapi and Patali Gur. **Drinks:** Chai the milky sweet tea available almost everywhere. Green coconut water is a fine, safe and refreshing drink available as well.





ADVENTURE TOURISM

Bangladesh is one of the best destinations to adore some adventure activities amidst the natural grandeur. There is an extensive list of adventure activities that range from hiking through the hills to gliding across rivers or traversing the tribe.

Old **Dhaka Rickshaw Tour:** Take a stroll around the old Dhaka during your visit along the seaside. through markets and into the historic campus of Dhaka University, illustrious Shankhari Bazar district famous Curzon building. Koro Katra, which is considered one of the gateways of Dhaka. Shankhari Bazar. and spectacular Star Mosque No Dhaka tour would be complete without a ride aboard a rickshaw.



Sundarbans Sightsee: It is a perfect place for a group or family tour. Sundarban Mangrove forest is

the single largest mangrove forest in the whole world situated in the southwestern part of Bangladesh. Sundarbans National Park is ideal for fishing, swimming, boating and sailing.

Chittagong Hills: A river cruise through the Chittagong Hills along with a trek to the naturally formed lotus shaped Boga Lake is quite popular among visitors. It also offers beautiful sunsets and panoramic views over the hills, lakes, waterfalls, and few Buddhist temples.

Water Sports: Kapati Lake, located in the hill districts of Rangamati, offers excellent opportunities for water sports. Cox's Bazaar is one of the most popular locations for these and other water sports.



Otter Fishing in Khulna: Otter fishing is a fishing technique which uses trained otters to fish in rivers. This method has been practiced since the 6th century in various parts of the world, and is still practiced in southern Bangladesh. Otter fishing is usually done at night between 9pm and 5am.

Tour Trekking to Hum Hum Waterfall: The fascinating Hum Hum waterfall is located in Razkandi, deep raw forest in Maulvibazar District. It is actually a place where you can find the real taste of adventure. The height of the fall is about 135-160 feet. Trek up to the waterfall and feel the energy and vigour in its cold fresh water, before trekking back to the hotel.



Rocket Paddle Steamer Ride: The Rocket runs daily between Dhaka and Khulna, stopping at Chandpur, Barisal, Mongla and many other ports during the journey. An overnight cruise on the Rocket Paddle Steamer in Bangladesh is one of the world's classic travel journey. The ships are operated by the Bangladesh Inland Waterway Transport Corporation (BIWTC) and reservations are made via their offices.

SHOPPING

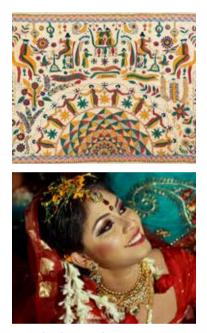
Bangladesh is indeed a shoppers' paradise with a rich tradition in handicrafts at throw away prices. The color of the markets adds to the friendly chaos of the city with its unbelievable amount of traffic. New Market is Dhaka's largest market while Bashundhara City is a biggest shopping mall and that's saying something!

What to buy?

Traditional Nakshi Katha: Kanthas serve mainly as bed pallets and as light wraps. Small kanthas are used as swaddling clothes for babies. The quilts are now in great demand because of the colourful patterns and designs embroidered on them. The cost of making Nakshi Kantha is nominal, but the worth and time-consuming needle work makes it expensive and valuable.

Bengali Jewellery: Bengal is a treasure trove of splendid jewellery and one of the best selling consumer products. It is chunky and brightly colored, but if you are searching for classic gold pieces, you will find those too as well as inexpensive freshwater pearls. The Mouchak Market in the Malibagh area has a good reputation for quality. The more you explore, the more you discover.

Pink Pearl: Bangladesh is known for pink pearl around the world. For pearls, you may visit Arong market, which is renowned for it and guaranteed for pureness. Prices depend on the size, shape of the pearls and negotiations.



Jamdani Saari: Jamdani is a fine muslin textile, an organic art form, which, over the years since its creation, has shifted in style and design. The patterns and motifs lovingly and meticulously intertwined into the fabric are depictions of the patience and creative imagination of the craftsmen. Jamdani saari is one of the finest muslin textiles of Bangladesh. There are a lot of places from where you can buy finest Jamdani saari from Dhaka. Bangladesh. Alongside saris, there is a good collection of gorgeous scarves as well.

Leather: It is the second largest export for Bangladesh. You can find attractive leather jacket closely followed by handbags, men's bags, document cases, belts, wallets, purses and key cases.

Cane and Bamboo Crafts: In Bangladesh, fibres, reed, cane bamboo are widely used to make prayer mats, baskets, sieves and trays and caskets. Baskets and mats can be found everywhere in Bangladesh. Almost fifty to sixty varieties of baskets are now available in the urban market. The price of products depends on its length and the artwork applied to it.

Brassware & Copperware:

Among the best buys are brass and copperware trays, wall decorations, candle holder, lamp shades, vases etc. The brassware of Bangladesh has good standing in international market for uniqueness. The traditional cottage brassware industry in Bangladesh is situated in Dhamrai Upazila of Dhaka District.





CULTURAL DO'S AND DON'TS IN BANGLADESH

- Shaking hands is common to greet your business partner. However, if you greet a businesswoman, it is best to wait to see if she extends her hand before doing so. Otherwise, a slight bow of the head will do.
- It is not right to eat publicly during the holy month of Ramadan.
- Do not wear shorts or skirts above the knees on formal occasions and in public places also when you are visiting a religious site.
- Pay attention to smaller acts of hospitality and courtesy by offering to put others before yourself.
- Be respectful of elders. Bangladeshis consider elders to be deeply important and requiring deference.
- Drink bottle water is comparatively safe and keep yourself hydrated all the time.
- Always take care of your belongings while visiting busy places.
- Don't take alcohol in public, it is strictly prohibited.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Bangladesh Tourism Board, Level- 3, Building- 2, BSL Office Complex (Hotel Inter Continental) 1, Minto Road, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000.

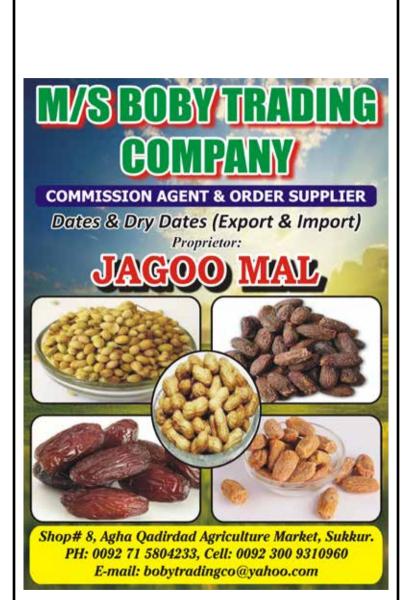
Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Floor-19, Building-6, Secretariat Road, Dhaka, Bangladesh | Tel: 00880 2-9545024 Website: www.mocat.gov.bd

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority, 141-143, Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka -1000, Bangladesh | Tel: 00880-2-9556151/55 Fax: 00880-2-9551072 | Email: biwta@bttb.net.bd Website: http://www.biwta.gov.bd/

Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation, BRTC Building, 25 Rajuk Avenue, Motijheel, Dhaka, Bangladesh | Tel: 00880 2 9554350 Fax: 00880 2 9555788 | Email: chairman@brtc.gov.bd Website: http://www.brtc.gov.bd/

Bangladesh Railway http://www.railway.gov.bd/ | Tel: 01711691520

Local Emergency Hotlines: Ambulance: 199 | Fire: 9-555-555 Police: 866-551-3



OVER THE LAND OF THUNDER DRAGON, THE SUN OF PEACE AND HAPPINESS SHINES TO INFINITY... 33



KINGDOM OF

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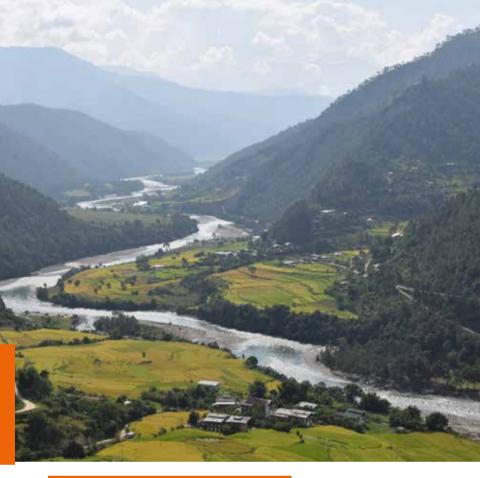


By the sides of the glimmering river, darling buds and blossoms do dance with the rhythm of breeze blown from the mystical mountains rising to infinity way above the clouds. Deities and goddesses dwell in the hidden and untouched sides of great Himalayas, Dongkya Range, Black Mountains, and Donga Range, bless the land of peace and happiness that preserves the beauty of nature giving life to the beings. Colourful birds, fluttering here and there, sing with the echo coming from the far ever hills. Gigantic trees, greenery plains mingled with hills, milky waterfalls, flora and fauna calms the hearts and minds of people visiting this last Shangri La, the great kingdom of Bhutan.



JOURNEY THROUGH BHUTAN

- Official Name Kingdom of Bhutan
- Government Constitutional Monarchy
- Capital Thimphu
- Area 38,394 km² (14,824 sq. mi)
- Population 754,394 (World Bank 2018)
- Religions Buddhism (74.7%) | Hinduism (22.6%
- Languages Dzongkha (Official)
- Literacy Rate 66.56% (2017)
- Currency Ngultrum (BTN)
- Time Zone GMT +6:00 Hours
- Electricity Standard Voltage 230 V | Frequency -50 Hz



GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW

Bhutan is a landlocked country on the southern slopes of the eastern Himalayas. It is bordered by the Tibet Autonomous Region of China to the north, the Indian state of Sikkim, West Bengal, and Assam to the west and south, and the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh to the east. The land of Bhutan encompasses extremely high and steep mountain ranges along with a network of giant rivers that create extensive valleys and fascinating greenery. The great Himalayas, Dongkya Range, Black Mountains, and Donga Range are Bhutan's prominent mountain ranges that mesmerise the world. This wonderful geographical diversity mingled with varied climate conditions creates a splendid span of ecosystems rich with biodiversity in this enchanting land.

Based on geographical and cultural factors, for the purpose of administration, Bhutan is divided into 20 Dzongkhags (districts), and further into 205 Gewogs (village blocks) which in turn are divided into numerous Thromdes (municipalities).



HISTORICAL BACKDROP

Archaeological evidence of stone tools, weapons, elephants, and remnants of large stone structures reveal that Bhutan had been inhabited by people as early as 4,000 years ago. In ancient times it had several names. Bhutan has been the most renowned name, derived from a Sanskrit word Bhu-Uttan, meaning the High Land.

Before the arrival of Buddhism, Bonism was the native religion of Bhutan. Buddhism was first introduced to Bhutan in the 7th century. Then, in the 8th century AD, Buddhism was propagated widely across the country by Indian Guru Padmasambhava.

When the British Empire was gaining power in India, Bhutan signed a treaty with the British India in 1774. Afterwards, as India gained independence in 1947 from the British rule, Bhutan signed a new treaty in 1949. In 1953 King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck established the country's first legislature, the National Assembly, the Royal Advisory Council in 1965, and the Cabinet in 1968 to promote democracy in the country. Significantly, in 2005 the king unveiled the country's first constitution and in 2008 the first democratic elections for the parliament were held. Today, Bhutan is a Democratic Constitutional Monarchy.

MAJOR ATTRACTIONS OF BHUTAN

Culture: The culture and traditions in Bhutan are major attractions for tourists. The culture is profoundly influenced by its Buddhist heritage. One of the most distinctive features of the Bhutanese is their traditional dress and inimitable garments that have evolved over thousands of years.

Language: Bhutan is linguistically rich with more than nineteen dialects across the country. The richness of linguistic diversity can be credited to the geographical area of the nation with its high mountain passes and deep valleys. The national language is Dzongkha, the native language of the Ngalops of western Bhutan.

Carnivals & Music: The richness of Bhutanese cultural diversity is further enhanced by the wide variety of extravagant and colourful festivals celebrated throughout the country. Mingled with traditional music, masked dances, dramas are artistic traditional features at Bhutanese festivals. Traditional music is the authentic heart of Bhutanese culture. The music includes a spectrum of subgenres, ranging from folk to religious song and music. Some of the most popular Bhutanese musical instruments are drangyen (lute), piwang (or chiwang, or fiddle), lim (flute), and yangchen (hammered dulcimer), which are all used to accompany traditional songs and dances.











Bhutanese Architecture: The architecture is another component that makes the Bhutanese culture distinct and unique. As per the nation's geology and atmosphere, the traditional designs incorporate slanted rooftops, earthen walls, and complex wooden work. Phalluses on the walls are viewed as sacred. No iron nail is used in the construction.

Monasteries and **Temples:** Settled in the Eastern Himalavas. Bhutan is known for its histrionic landscape, going from subtropical fields to steep mountains and valleys speckled with monasteries and dzongs. Both Monasteries and Temples are found everywhere in the country, from every valley village to almost every mountain. They serve as the holy sites for reliaious. social and cultural purposes.



Bhutanese Literature: In Bhutan, the essential spotlight has been on oral literature, when contrasted with composed writing. For quite a long time, Bhutanese passed on their insight into religion, scholastics and culture to the youth through an oral medium.

Demographics: The gender ratio in the Bhutan population is 1.130 (1,130 males per 1000 females), which is higher than the global gender ratio i.e. 1016 males to 1000 females. The 74.7 % of Bhutanese are Buddhist, 22.6 % are Hindu's, 2.0 % follow folk or traditional religions, 0.5 % are Christians, and 0.2 % are Muslims.



FLORA & FAUNA: NATURE LOVERS DREAM

Bhutan is indeed a nature lover's dream, being rich with serene mountains, swift rivers, deep valleys, and various rare and endemic species of flora and fauna. This beautiful land is presently considered as one of the ten best biodiversity hotspots in the world.

Bhutan's nature is inclusive of 5,500 species of vascular plants such as charming rhododendron species, magnolias, over 600 orchid species, various medical plants, beard moss and the elegant blue poppy, the national flower in the Land of the Thunder Dragon. Around 9 percent of the land is a biological corridor that connects the protected ecological areas. Bhutanese biodiversity conservation system is considered as a unique methodology in the world.

Great diversity in wild animals is remarkable in Bhutan, plenteous with over 165 species of mammals and over 620 bird species, many of them endemic to the country. The kingdom is a unique home for tigers, elephants, golden langurs, butterflies, water buffalos, blue sheep, rhesus monkeys and yaks. The high Himalayas range is the domain of the snow leopard. The delightful birds in Bhutan include the palas osprey, the black necked crane, and the hornbill.

MAJOR FETES AND FESTIVALS

Colourful festivals in Bhutan are well famous for their rich creativity, aesthetic pleasure, delightfulness, full of energy and life. The ancient expressions of Buddhist culture, historical heroism and legendary victories are manifested and celebrated across the country captivating the minds of people in the world. The following are some major fetes and festivals celebrated in Bhutan, the Land of the Thunder Dragon.

Thimphu Tshechu Festival is referred as the national festival of Bhutan held in the capital city, Thimphu, for three days in September or in the 8th month of Lunar Calendar.

Jambay Lhakhang Drup

Festival celebrates the foundation of Jambay Lhakhang Monastery and to honor Guru Rimpoche. Brave fire events, mask dancing, traditional music, plays and artistic performances of this fascinating festival attract the locals and tourists across the globe.

Wangduephodrang Tshechu

is an annual festival introduced after the Dzong was completed in 1639 by the disciplined effort of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal near PunPuna Tsang Chu. Thousands of locals and tourists gather to revel in the festivities to celebrate life and merriment.

Paro Tshechu Festival is extremely popular among locals and tourists. Monks and laymen, in masks and vibrant multi-coloured brocade costumes, re-enact and replay the scenes from legendary tales and historical anecdotes. The festival is held in March or April annually.





Haa Summer Festival is а relatively new celebration in Bhutan. Haa Summer Festival spreads the vibe of contentment where tourists can witness and enjoy the uplifting celebration of traditional-living culture, vibrant pictures, lively paintings, traditional sports, unique Bhutanese cuisine, and enjoy the lively folk songs and cultural dance performed by the people of Haa Valley.

Tourists can also experience the night at one of the many village home stays and enjoy the hospitality of the local people of Haa Valley.

Matsutake is a famous harvest festival in Bhutan celebrated by the locals of Ura valley during the mushroom season. During this festival, the locals make delicious delicacies and the visitors can get a peek of the life style of the people. This celebration is annually held in August.

Takin Festival focuses on the Bhutanese national animal, Takin. It is a kind of cattle chamois or gnu goat, native to the Eastern Himalayas. The festival is held annually in February at Jigme Dorji National Park located at Gasa Dzongkhag, giving people a sight of Takin, the national animal of Bhutan which is a rare sight.

Ura Yakchoe Festival is a popular traditional dance performance, annually held in April at the Ura Valley in Bumthang. Symbolizing the sacred relics, popular folk









dances are performed along with the traditional dance of Ura Yakchoe.

Wangduephodrang Tshechu Festival is a three day festival, arranged annually in June and attended by the natives of Thimphu and Punakha in Bhutan. The festival was introduced by the Zhaddrung Ngawang Namgyal right after the completion of Dzong that had served as an administrative centre built in 1639.

Annual Black-Necked Crane Festival is celebrated at the Gangtey Gompa courtyard located in the Phobjikha Valley. The main objective of the festival is to create awareness on creating and protecting the endangered black necked cranes of Bhutan and to strengthen the link between conservation, economic welfare and sustainable livelihoods of the community.

Artefacts' & Traditional Industries: Traditional arts and crafts are an integral part of Bhutanese cultural heritage. These arts were formally categorized during the reign of Gyalse Tenzin Rabgay, the fourth temporal ruler of Bhutan. The following are major traditional art industries in Bhutan: THAG-ZO, TSHA-ZO, SHAG-ZO, LHA- ZO,SHING-ZO,DO-ZO,PAR-ZO,JIM-ZO, JIM-ZO, LUG-ZO, GAR-ZO, TROE- KO, DE-ZO and TSHEM-ZO.





HOW TO GET THERE?

Welcome to the Last Shangri-La

Visa Process: All visitors travelling to Bhutan need a visa except visitors from India, Bangladesh and Maldives. Nationals of these countries can obtain a permit at the port of entry on producing a valid passport with a minimum of 6 months validity. Indian nationals may also use their Voters Identity Card (VIC).

All other tourists must obtain a visa clearance prior to arrival in Bhutan. Visas are processed through an online system directly by a licensed Bhutanese Tour Operator or through a foreign travel agent.

You can access comprehensive list of Licensed Tour Operators at www. bhutan.travel/tour-operators.

Visitors are required to send the photo-page of the passport to the Tour Operator who will then apply for the Bhutanese visa. The visa will be processed by the Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB) once the full payment of the holiday (including a USD 40 visa fee) has been wire transferred to the TCB bank account. The visa clearance will be processed within 72 working hours. Visitors will be required to show the Visa Clearance Letter at the point of entry. The visa will then be stamped into the passport.

You can learn more about visa requirements at www.bhutan. travel/page/visaentry-permit.

In line with the tourism policy of Bhutan "High Value - Low Impact", a Minimum Daily Package is required for tourists. Please learn more about the Minimum Daily Package before travel to Bhutan.



Entry Points: Tourists can enter Bhutan through Phuntsholing, Gelephu and Samdrup Jongkhar if coming by land or Paro if coming by air.

By Air: Druk Air and Bhutan Airlines are the two carriers of the kingdom of Bhutan. Druk Air Corporation Limited, operating as Druk Air - Royal Bhutan Airlines, is the flag carrier of Bhutan. Tashi Air Pvt. Ltd, trading as Bhutan Airlines, is Bhutan's first private airline.

AIRPORT INFORMATION:

Paro International Airport is the sole international airport of the four airports in Bhutan. Gelephu Airport, Bathpalathang Airport, and Yongphulla Airport are three domestic airports in the country. Paro International Airport is in a deep valley on the bank of the river Paro Chhu. With surrounding peaks as high as 5,500 meters (18,000 feet), it is considered one of the world's most challenging airports, and less than two dozen pilots are certified to land at the Paro International Airport, Flights to and from Paro are allowed only under visual meteorological conditions and are restricted to davlight hours from sunrise to sunset. Flying into the Paro International Airport is typically an exciting experience as the descent into Paro valley brings passengers closer to the mountain tops than most other flights in the world. The flights between Paro and Kathmandu are the most exciting ones as the aircraft passes over four of the five highest peaks in the world, including Mount Everest.

TRAVELLERS' ESSENTIALS

Best Time to Visit: Bhutan has four distinct seasons and each season has its own beauty and charm. Bhutan is a year-round destination. Therefore, visitors can plan the tours according to their preferences. The four seasons are Spring (March, April and May), Summer (June, July and August), Autumn (September, October and November), and Winter (December, January and February).

What to wear? With great altitudinal variations, climate is diverse in Bhutan. Therefore, it is advisable to be prepared for unforeseen weather conditions. It is better to have rainwear, raincoats, sweaters, and hats for the tourists. It is recommended to dress modestly and respectfully especially if planning a visit to the monasteries, Dzongs and other religious sights. Health Requirements: Before embarking on a trip to Bhutan, please seek advice from a doctor regarding vaccinations and appropriate medications that tourists need to have prior to their travels. Tourists should have tetanus, typhoid and hepatitis A inoculations.

All tourists entering Bhutan must produce a COVID-19 Negative PCR Test Report (done within 72 hours by an accredited laboratory) at the time of boarding and port of arrival. All tourists have to undergo mandatory facility guarantine for 21 days and testing as per existing protocols of the Ministry of Health, Bhutan. In future, the vaccination of COVID-19 would be a prerequisite for travellers entering Bhutan. Up-to-date information can be obtained from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bhutan website: https://www.mfa.gov.bt/.



Public Holidays

Winter Solstice (Bhutan)	Jan O2
Traditional Day of Offering (Bhutan)	Jan 14
Birth Anniversary of His Majesty the King (Bhutan)	Feb 21
Birth Anniversary of 3rd Druk Gyalpo (Bhutan)	May 02
Lord Buddha's Parinirvana	May 26
First Sermon of Lord Buddha	July 14
Dassain	Oct 15
Descending Day of Lord Buddha	Oct 27
Coronation day of His Majesty the King	Nov 01
National Day of Bhutan	Dec 17

Travel Insurance: The Royal Insurance Corporation of Bhutan has initiated a travel and medical plan solely for the visitors. Travel insurance can be provided through the Bhutanese tour operator or international partners. For more information, please visit the website of Royal Insurance Corporation of Bhutan.

Currency: Bhutan's currency is Ngultrum (Nu.) It is on par with the Indian rupee which is widely accepted in Bhutan. In addition, POS (Point of Sale) services are available nationwide, meaning visitors can pay by credit card at most hotels and handicrafts stores.

Banking: Major Banks in Bhutan are the Bank of Bhutan Limited, Bhutan National Bank, Druk PNB and Tashi Bank. Traveller's cheque can easily be withdrawn and exchanged for local currency. Many of the banks provide online banking facilities as well.

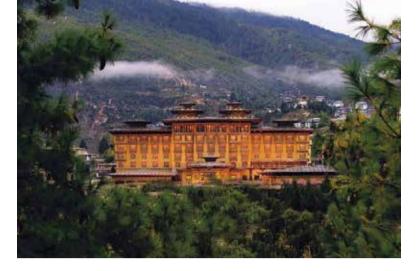
Working Hours:

Government Offices: Bhutan's Government offices start at 9am till 5pm. The summer timing is followed from March till the end of October. The winter timing starts from the month of November till the end of February, beginning at 9am and ending at 4pm.

Banks: Start at 9am to 4am or 5pm Monday to Friday, 9am to 12 Noon Saturday.

Shops: Business starts at 8am and remains until 8pm or 9pm.

Accommodation: A wide variety of accommodation is available in Bhutan ranging from luxurious 5-star hotels to cosy little hotels and homestays in traditional Bhutanese homes and settings. Visitors can



be assured of their warmth and comfort of the hotels. Similarly, the ambiance and hospitality offered by the hotels are incredible. The types of accommodations can be divided into hotels, resorts, farm-stays, and homestays. In addition, visitors embarking on long treks will be provided with tents and whatever other camping equipment is deemed necessary.

Transport Services: Royal Bhutan Helicopter Service provides tourists with helicopters for sightseeing. Domestic flights are also available for travelling to various regions in Bhutan. In addition, tourists can use the taxi services. Furthermore, comfortable cars, jeeps and buses are easily available for tourists.

Communication Facilities:

Bhutan has a good network of telecommunication facilities. Most hotels and cafe's offer Wi-Fi internet access. Bhutan has a comprehensive mobile phone network with global roaming facilities. Medical Facilities: Affordable and accessible health care is central to the public policy of Bhutan. The government provides universal health care in Bhutan and there are over 30 hospitals across the country.





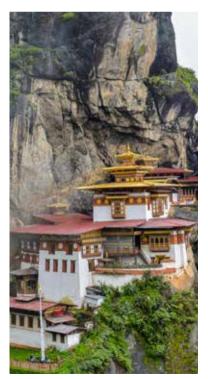
Explore the Land of the Thunder Dragon

Kingdom of Bhutan, the Land of the Thunder Dragon, is indeed a charming fairy tale plenteous with natural wonders, spiritual mysteries, and cultural legacy. Being a least heard paradise on earth, Bhutan is a wonderful dream destination for tourists who are into exploring the hidden beauty of culture, art, nature, and adventure in this splendid Last Shangri-La.

Taktsang Monastery is the Tiger's Nest in Paro, one of the holiest places in Bhutan. The monastery is mounted on a high granite cliff and was established for meditation. Apart from the spiritual significance of the place, it is ideal for trekking.

Thimphu is a culturally significant place in Bhutan and is the charming capital city nestled in the Himalayas with the beautiful sights of the Chuu River flowing through it. Tashichho Dzong, National Memorial Chorten and Motithang Takin Preserve are top attractions in Thimphu.

Punakha, a breath-taking destination in Bhutan, has been inextricably linked to some of the most momentous events in the



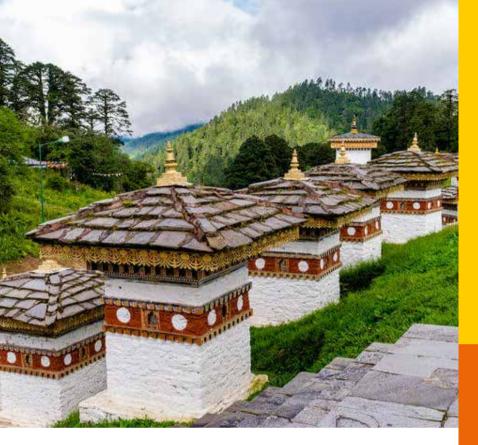
Bhutanese history. People visit this place mostly to understand the Bhutanese history and to enjoy its natural beauty. Punakha Dzong, Chhimi Lhakhang and Limbhukha are the things visitors love to see in this beautiful area.

Punakha Dzong, known for its brilliant structure, is the second largest fortress in Bhutan. Among the best tourist places in Bhutan, the dzong reflects the beautiful stories and traditions of Buddhist culture. Punakha is the winter capital of Bhutan and the head clergy of the country spends the winter in this spectacular Dzong.

Paro is a historic town with many sacred sites and historical buildings scattered through the area which makes it a popular tourist destinations in Bhutan. Rinpung Dzong is the Fortress on a Heap of Jewels built in the 16th century situated in the city. Zuri Dzong is one of Bhutan's oldest fortresses in the city. Tourists can enjoy scenic views of Paro valley.

Great Buddha Dordenma is a gigantic Shakyamuni Buddha statue in the mountains of Bhutan. The statue is 169 feet (52.5 m) tall, built at the top of the hills in Thimphu. This iconic bronze statue gilded in gold, is visible from almost anywhere in Thimphu creating peace and calm in the minds of people. Buddha Dordenma is the largest statue made of bronze and gold.





Dochula Pass is beautifully built temple and stupas, with the picturesque Gangkar Puensum peak in the background, makes the Dochula Pass one of the most beautiful tourist places in Bhutan. Dochula pass is situated on the East-West Road from Thimphu to Punakha.

Folk Heritage Museum is the oldest Mud and Wood Structure in Bhutan. It displays the local way of life and culture of Bhutan. The most astonishing part about this museum is that it has been opened in a 150-year old wood and mud structure. The whole house is decorated with colourful banners that catch the eyes of people.

Talo Village is an ideal place for explorers who love to experience the rural agrarian culture in Bhutan. It is a perfect place for those who seek solace. Talo offers picturesque landscapes decorated with sweet corn and pea fields. The scene is complemented by snow-capped mountains.

Trashi Chhoe Dzong is the place where all the festivities and religious events in Thimphu take place. It is the largest monastery in the northern fringe of Thimphu. It is in Chhagchhen Lam, Thimphu, Bhutan.

The strong Bhutanese culture and traditions will leave the visitors enchanted by its fascinating natural wonders and divine culture.

THINGS TO DO IN BHUTAN

Bhutanese Cuisines:

Considered among the most indigenous cooking styles on the planet, Bhutanese food is exotic, intensely flavourful, and spicy that you shouldn't miss out while in Bhutan. Chillis are an essential part of nearly every dish and are considered so important that most Bhutanese people would not enjoy a meal that is not spicy. The magical dishes to eat when you're in Bhutan include:

- Ema Datshi
- Jasha Maru
- Goep (Tripe)

• Momos

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ADVENTURE AND ECO TOURISM IN LAST SHANGRI-LA

Bountiful with wonders of nature, mystical mountains, deep valleys, swift rivers, gigantic waterfalls, crystal blue lakes, glaciers, flora and fauna, Bhutan is indeed a nature lover's dream. Explore what truly sets Bhutan apart from anywhere else and discover one of the most remote kingdoms on Earth. The following are some of the delightful adventure activities that can be experienced in this Land of the Thunder Dragon.

White Water Rafting and Kayaking in Punakha: Crystal clear River fed by the Himalayan glacier descends from the highland into the southern lower region presents challenging waterfalls for river rafting in Punakha is amazing for everyone and especially the beginners.



• Zow Shungo

Shakam Paa

Phaksha Paa

Red Rice

Archery in Bhutan: The glory of Bhutan is not hidden from anyone. Seeing the level of enthusiasm that Bhutanese have for sports, it would not be wrong to say that archery is the crown jewel of the country. It is the National Sport of Bhutan and is celebrated all over the Kingdom. The joy of seeing an arrow leaving the bow and hitting the target, some 100 meters away, is unparalleled. Do not miss to experience archery before leaving Bhutan.



Trekking: Treks in Bhutan are considered to be daring and especially short treks leave you with an alluring experience for life. Trekking in Bhutan offers an invigorating experience of the culture and environment. The most popular treks include The Druk Path Trek, Chomolhari Trek, The Snowman Trek, Dagala Thousand Lakes Trek, Punakha Winter Trek, and Bumthang Owl Trek.

Kuenselphodrang Day Hike: This is a lovely hike from Kuenselphodrang to Changangkha monastery. The hike is through a pine forest that takes up to 3 to 4 hours. The best time for this trail is to start in the morning when the temperature is quite cool. A guide is a must on this trail. Do not hike alone on this trail as some people have encountered black Himalayan bears.

Cycling: A cycling adventure in Bhutan is truly adventurous. Cyclists of all levels adore the majestic scenery and exclusive culture of Bhutan, whether you opt to climb its challenging mountain passes or takes leisurely rides through the country's lush valleys. Please check out Bhutan by Bike (www.bhutanbybike.com) for booking awestruck trips.



the Punakha Crossing Suspension Bridge: The Suspension Bridge in Punakha adorned with colorful prayer flags, is one of the Bhutan's longest bridge. The bridge connects the Punakha Dzong to Shengana, Samdingkha, and Wangkha villages across the Tsang Chu River. A guick stop by the village nearby can offer sightseers a legitimate countryside lifestyle in Bhutan.

Rock Climbing: Rock climbing was first introduced in Bhutan in 1998 by the "Vertical Bhutan Climbing Club". The "Nose", a climbing rock ideally situated just above Bhutan's capital Thimphu, offers 13 different safely bolted climbing routes. This adventurous sport is an enthralling medium of encountering the exertion, excitement, and exploration.

Paragliding in Ura Valley:

Paragliding is one of the most recently introduced outdoor sports activities in Bhutan. Paragliding is being operated in the fascinating valley of Ura, Phobjika, and Bumthang, controlled by alpine flying experienced and licensed pilots. Paragliding is one of the most fascinating activities while exploring Bhutan.

Camping in the Wilderness:

Take a break from the regular hectic urban life and advance your trip towards the realm of dense greens. Camping in the wilderness is one of the most striking experiences one can ever have. Embrace the opportunity to be one with nature while watching the nerve-racking sceneries and the clear blue sky.







SHOPPING

Bhutan has been rated to be the happiest places in the world. When you visit such a happy nation, you should surely bring back souvenirs which will always remind you of the majestic trip that you had.

What to buy?

The Himalayan Beads: The Himalayan beads are also referred to as the Dzi beads and you will find its use in making of necklaces and bracelets. In Bhutan, they are considered to be spiritually helpful as the people there

believe that these beads could ward off the evil spirit and also bless you with good luck and fortune. Bhutan is known to be home to some of the most expensive beads in the world.



Dappa: These are the handmade wooden bowls which are made in Trashiyangtse, a small district in Bhutan. This too comes in varying sizes, colors and designs and you can choose the right ones based on your requirements. These boxes can be used for various purposes and are sturdy and reliable.

Thangkas (Local Paintings): The Thangka is local Bhutanese artwork and is considered sacred amongst the locals. The paintings are made with different background colours and are usually block printed or embroidered. They are drawn on cloth or silk applique.

Masks: The masks are mainly made by carved wood and then a lot of beads and colors are used to make them attractive. Handwoven Textiles: Bhutan is famous for its textiles globally. The textiles are woven with raw cotton, silk, and regular cotton. Yathra and Bumthap Mathra textiles are renowned all over the world and they are woven using sheep wool and even yak hair too. You can check out the designs, patterns, style, and price and decide if you would like to take some of them home.

Buddhist Sculptures: Shopping in Bhutan is incomplete without getting yourself a beautiful Buddha sculpture for your spiritual wellbeing. Clay is the primary material used in making these statues, and most of the traditional shops sell them.

SOME DO'S AND DON'TS TO BE CONSIDERED

- Follow the proper dress etiquettes. Please make sure that your dress code does not offend the religious sentiments.
- Carry enough cash in local currency as many businesses do not accept credit cards.
- Get the maximum use of the assigned tour guide and follow their instructions.
- Do follow the traffic rules and regulations.
- Remove sun caps and hats while visiting temples or Dzongs.
- Do not feed birds/animals while visiting natural sites.
- Do not smoke freely anywhere you visit. Look for the designated smoking zones.
- Be courteous to old people and treat then with respect.
- Carry enough cash as many business do not accept credit cards.
- Respond to the assigned tour guide and follow their instruction.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Official Travel Destination Website of Bhutan: www.bhutan.travel/

Tourism Council of Bhutan: Post Box: 126, Thimphu, Bhutan Tel: 00975 2 323251 / 323252 | Fax: 00975 2 323695 Email: info@tourism.gov.bt | Website: https://www.tourism.gov.bt/

Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators: PO Box: 938, Thimphu, Bhutan Tel: 00975 1757 9019 | Website: http://www.abto.org.bt/

Royal Bhutan Helicopter Services Limited: PO Box: 1296, Old Hangar, Paro International Airport, Paro, Bhutan Tel: 00975 17170964 / 00975 77106681 | Email: info@rbhsl.b Website: https://rbhsl.bt/rbhslweb/public/app

Important Hotlines: Ambulance: 112 | Fire: 110 | Police: 113 | Thimphu Traffic: 111 | National Disaster: 219 | Bhutan Insurance Limited: 201 Bhutan National Bank: 144 | Bhutan Telecom: 1600 | Bhutan Power Corporation: 1250 | Bhutan Airlines – Druk Air: 1300 | General Post Office: 129

Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs: Department of Immigration Tel: 00975 2321078 / 334798 | Website: http://www.mohca.gov.bt

Your One Window Facilitator in Pakistan

We at Texlynx are here to be your eyes and ears in Pakistan. Founded In 1998, with more than 20 years of experience, Texlynx imparts the required knowledge and provides the relevant services that allow corporations to be successful in developing a strong footprint in Pakistan as we intimately understand the following:

- Country's culture
- Global business practices
- All kinds of Government Laws, regulations, bottlenecks and Business Support
- Logistical support

The following services are provided as part of our consulting division:

1) Setting up your footprint in Pakistan

We help you to form a foothold by guiding you at every step till your successful establishment in Pakistan

- · Developing a business plan and business strategy
- Identifying a location for the company to suit your requirements
- · Setting up the company and helping with initial kick off
- Identifying and selecting a local business partner for operations as well as investments
- Identifying Joint Venture and acquisition opportunities

2) Sourcing of multiples items that Pakistan produces

We can source a wide range of items that Pakistan specializes in, these include

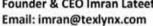
- Textiles
- · Leather Goods
- Sportswear & Sports Medicated Items.
- Surgical Equipment
- Food Supplies
- Construction Material

3) We can be your local representative office in

Pakistan

We can design a custom-made solution for your presence and needs in Pakistan.

Founder & CEO Imran Lateef





Address: 7P Model Town Extension, Lahore, Pakistan Phone #: +92 42 3520 3020 Website: www.texlynx.com

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44 LAVISH BLEND OF ANCIENT TRADITIONS, ART AND WISDOM 33



REPUBLIC OF



Echoes in the hills touch the clouds of heaven mingling in the music of glimmering long rivers. The waves of the Indian Ocean constantly embrace the golden beach as though they are eternal friends in the infinite universe. The birds sing and the leaves of great trees dance with the rhythms of soothing breeze. The beautiful people with fragrant flowers walk through the timeless culture and pride fused with ancient knowledge. All these elements of great Indian civilization captivate the hearts of global travelers to discover the beauties of Indian glory.



JOURNEY THROUGH INDIA

Official Name	Republic of India
Government	Federal Parliamentary Constitutional Republic
Capital	New Delhi
Area	3,287,263 km² (1,269,219 sq. mi)
Population	1.353 Billion (World Bank 2018)
Religions	Hinduism (79.8%) Islam (14.2%) Christianity (2.3%) Sikhism (1.7%) Buddhism (0.7%) Jainism (0.4%) Others (0.88%)
Language	Hindi (Official)
Literacy Rate	74.04%
Currency	Indian Rupee (INR)
Time Zone	GMT+5:30 Hours
Electricity	Standard Voltage - 230 V Frequency - 50 Hz

GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW

India is the seventh largest country in the world in terms of area which is 3,287,263 sq km (1,269,219 sq miles). India is bordered by Pakistan, China, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, Bhutan, while Sri Lanka and the Maldives are island nations to the south of India. Coastal plains in India are situated along the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea. India has seven major mountain ranges having peaks of over 1,000 m (3,300 feet). The Himalayas are the only mountain range to have snow-capped peaks. To the West of the country is the Thar Desert (Great Indian Desert), which consists of a mix of rocky and sandy deserts. The highest point in Indian Territory is Kangchenjunga, at 8,598 m (28,208 feet). India is divided into 28 states, 8 federally administered union territories and a national capital territory.

HISTORICAL BACKDROP

Indian history is as old as the history of mankind. Artefacts dating back to as much as 500,000 years have been found. India's history and culture is ancient and dynamic, spanning back to the beginning of human civilization. Beginning with a mysterious culture along the Indus River and in farming communities in the southern lands of India, the history of India is a crossroads of cultures from China to Europe, and the most significant Asian connection with the cultures of Africa.

The history begins with the birth of the Indus Valley Civilization, with sites such as Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa, and Lothal, and the coming of the Aryans. These two phases are usually described as the pre-Vedic and Vedic periods. It is in the Vedic period that Hinduism first arose and the Vedas are dated.

In the 5th century, large parts of India were united under Ashoka. However, he embraced Buddhism, and it was during his reign that Buddhism spread to other parts of Asia. Then, during the reign of the Mauryas, Hinduism took the shape that fundamentally transformed the religion into the present day form.

Islam first came to India in the 8th century, and by the 11th century had firmly established itself in India as a political force. The North Indian dynasties of the Lodhis, Tughlaqs, and numerous others, whose remains are visible in Delhi and scattered elsewhere around North India, were finally succeeded by the Mughal empire, under which India once again achieved a large measure of political unity.

The European presence in India dates to the latter part of 17th century when Mughal Empire began to disintegrate. In the contest for supremacy, the English emerged as victors, at the battlefields of Plassey, Buxar and later on against the rebellion of 1857-58, leading to subsequent crowning of Queen Victoria as Empress of India, completing the incorporation of India into the British Empire. Efforts to drive the British out of India finally succeeded in 1947.

MAJOR ATTRACTIONS OF INDIA

Monuments: The Historical Indian monuments such as the Red Fort, Taj Mahal, Victoria Memorial, Mahabodhi Temple and The Golden Temple represent the rich past and legacy of India. Cultural and Natural Heritage sights of India are listed as World Heritage Sites and some of the most visited tourist places.

Festivals: India is the land of festivals as they are an integral part of the Indian culture and people. Fairs and festivals of India are celebrated during the change of seasons or based on religious perspectives.

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Cuisines: Indian cuisine has a wide variety of regional food, primarily, curries, kebabs, and chutneys. Indian cuisines is world-famous for its delicious taste and spicy flavor.



Forts & Palaces: Forts and palace of Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Jodpur, Udaipur and Mysore are the true



reflection of royalty. They are the country's treasured manuscripts narrating the saga of this Land of Maharajas.

Temples: Temples in India are spread over almost each and every part of the country. These religious places are reflective of Hindu, Buddhist and other ancient traditions. Thousands of years old temples are major attractions and architecture highlights the history of Hindustan.



Beaches: India is a country with some of the most beautiful beaches with its long coastline of the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal. Beaches in India play an important role in attracting tourists through their natural beauty, white sand, and Blue Ocean. Backwater of Kerala and beaches of Goa are the top listed destinations among other seashore places.

FLORA & FAUNA

India is home to more than 50,000 species of plants, including a variety of endemics. The use of plants as a source of medicine has been an integral part of life in India from the earliest times. There are more than 3,000 plant species officially documented as falling into eight main floristic regions: Western Himalayas, Eastern Himalayas, Assam, and Indus plain, Ganges plain, the Deccan, Malabar and the Andaman Islands.

It is estimated that there are over 500 species of mammals, 200 plus species of birds and about 30,000 species of insects in India. In addition to the above, there are hundreds of species of fish and reptiles. Indian wildlife comprises of the Asian elephant, Asiatic lion, the Royal Bengal Tiger, single horned Indian rhino, the wild buffalo (Indian Bison), many leopards and smaller cat species, large variety of deer, monkeys and wild goats. The reptile population includes a wide range of snakes, lizards and crocodiles. Birds range from the colorful peacocks and parrots to large stock of migrant water birds.

FESTIVALS AND CELEBRATIONS

India is the land of festivities. A large number of fairs and festivals in the country are celebrated throughout the year, with much enthusiasm and gusto. In fact, these fairs and festivals add colours to everyday life of the people.

Holi festival marks the beginning of spring. The night before Holi, bonfires are lit and people circumambulate the fire, which symbolises the end of Holika, sister of demon king.

Diwali is the 'festival of lights'. It celebrates Lord Ram and his wife Sita returning to their kingdom of Ayodhya following the defeat of Ravan. Hindus decorate their homes with fancy lights, clay lamps, candles and draw beautiful rangoli with colours and flowers to lift their spirituality and fight against evil. For most of the Indian families, Diwali is the most anticipated festival of the year.

Maha Shivaratri is celebrated to honor Lord Shiva, one of the main

Hindu gods, reflecting the end of ignorance and darkness. Shiva devotees praise Lord Shiva through the recitation of Shiv Chalisa. For Hindu women, Shivratri has a lot of significance and they celebrate it with extreme enthusiasm. People observe fast on this day and offer sweets, flowers and milk.

Kumbh Mela is believed to be the largest religious gathering on earth is held every 12 years on the banks of Sangam, the confluence of the holy rivers Ganga, Yamuna and the goddess Saraswati, where millions of devotees gather to bathe in the holy waters of the three rivers. The festival attracts over millions of people across the world.



Teej Festival is celebrated to welcome the rainy season and it is dedicated to the reunion of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. On this occasion, the married Hindu women observe fast, pray for the protection of their husbands and thank Goddess Parvati for the abundant monsoon. Teej festival is celebrated in July or August.

Ganesh Chaturthi is a ten-day festival observed to venerate Lord Ganesha, the son of Shiva and Parvati. Devotees bring home clay Ganesha idols and pray to them every day.

Navratri is a Hindu festival also known as Durga Puja. Navratri means nine nights, during which the feminine avatars of Goddess Durga are celebrated. There are four Navratri periods according to the equinoxes, but the one in autumn is widely celebrated all over India. Navratri is celebrated differently in India's various regions.

Raksha Bandhan is observed by Hindus across the world. Raksha Bandhan or Rakhi is a festival where sisters tie a colourful. decorative thread on the wrists of their brothers and perform pooja for their long life and health.

Dussehra, also called Vijayadashami, marks the triumph of Rama, an avatar of Vishnu, over the 10-headed demon king Ravana who abducted Rama's wife Sita. Symbolizing the victory of good over evil, Dussehra is celebrated on the 10th day of the month of Ashvina (September-October).

Baisakhi, one of the famous festivals of India, and is celebrated largely in Punjab and those around the world. It celebrates the welcoming of the harvest season for the rabi crops. It marks the day when the tenth Guru of Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh, laid out the foundation stone for the Panth Khalsa-the Order back in 1699.

Eid-ul-Fitr & Eid-Al-Adha are major festivals for Muslims in India. The festival is marked by people visiting the mosques for an auspicious prayer, wearing new clothes and preparing delicacies. Eid-ul-Fitr celebrates brotherhood among humanity, following the holy month of Ramadan.

HOW TO GET THERE?

WELCOME TO THE LAND OF WONDERS

By Air: India is well equipped with numerous major airports that offer both domestic and international flights. There are approximately 30 International airports and around 80 domestic airports which connect the vast nation. All the airports are highly developed with high-tech equipment and modern facilities. India's national overseas carrier is Air India. The following is the list of few major international airports of India:

- Indira Gandhi International Airport New Delhi, Delhi
- Chennai International Airport Chennai, Tamil Nadu
- Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport Mumbai, Maharashtra
- Cochin International Airport Kochi, Kerala
- Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport Kolkata, West Bengal
- Pune International Airport Pune, Maharashtra
- Rajiv Gandhi International Airport Hyderabad, Telangana
- Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport Ahmedabad, Gujarat
- Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru, Karnataka
- Dabolim Airport (Goa International Airport) Dabolim (Village), Goa

Entry & Visa Formalities:

• Visas required for most visitors; e-Visa (valid 60 days) is available for more than 150 nationalities. Longer trips require a standard six-month tourist visa. Citizens of Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives, don't need visas for India unless they arrive from mainland China. Except citizens of Japan and South Korea, who can obtain visas on arrival, nationals of all other countries need to apply for a visa before arriving in India. However, more than 150 nationalities can obtain the hassle-free sixty (60) days e-visa. It should be noted that the six-month tourist visa is valid from the date of issue, not the date of arrival in India.

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• **E-Citizens** from more than 150 countries can apply for an e-Visa (www. indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa). Travelers must apply a minimum of four days and a maximum of 120 days prior to the arrival in India. The visa will be valid from the date of arrival in India. It is a double-entry visa that lasts for 60 days from the first date of entry.

• **Customs Regulations:** Tourists should declare Indian rupees in excess of 10,000, any amount of cash over USD 5000, or a total amount of currency over USD 10,000 on arrival. Visitors are prohibited from importing more than one laptop, more than 2 litres of alcohol, more than 100 cigarettes or equivalent, or gifts and souvenirs worth over Indian Rs 8000. There are restrictions on exporting antiques as well.

By Train & Bus:There are various overland routes to India from countries such as Nepal, Pakistan, Bhutan and Bangladesh. Visitors who enter India by bus or train have to show their passport or relevant identification along with their required visa.

TRAVELLERS' ESSENTIALS

Climate: The climate in India varies greatly; from the deserts of Rajasthan to the cool highlands of Assam, the wettest place on earth. The weather is tropically hot with variations from region to region. The coolest weather lasts from December to February with cool, fresh mornings and evenings and dry sunny days. The period from March to June is extremely hot, dry and dusty. Monsoon rains occur in most regions between July to September.

What to wear: Lightweight cotton clothing is advised throughout the year, with an umbrella or raincoat for the monsoon season. Sweaters and warmer clothing are suitable for cooler evenings. Warmer clothing is needed for the northern mountainous areas of India, which can have quite cold winters.

Accommodation: From fancy 7 stars to a budget friendly liveable, there are lots of accommodation options available in India, including hotels, motels, resorts, inns, camping, hostels, home rentals etc. A list of approved heritage hotels in India is provided by the Ministry of Tourism (https://www. india.gov.in/india-glance/where-stay).









India offers the chance to try out some classic transport options including narrow-gauge railways, steam locomotives, the Ambassador car and the Enfield Bullet motorbike, indeed some people come to India for these alone.

Travelling by train is one of India's classic experiences which are full of surprises. It is very practical way to get around as the train routes cover almost the entire country. No visit to India is complete without experiencing the bustle of India's railway stations. Travelling by train is great fun!

Flying around India has a lot of advantages. For really making the most of your holiday in India, it allows you to see more in a shorter amount of time.

Buses go almost everywhere in India and are the only way to get around many mountainous areas. They tend to be the cheapest way to travel. Service is fast and frequent, and rarely need to be booked in advance. Avoid night buses unless there is no alternative. Auto Rickshaw & E-rickshaw also referred as autos and scooters are a threewheeled powered vehicle with a canvas roof and sides, usually with room for two passengers and limited luggage. It is the most convenient mode to commute over short distances within cities.



Taxi around the cities are usually metered, however, getting drivers to use the meter can be a trouble. To avoid fare-setting shenanigans, use prepaid taxis where possible. It is also recommended to use apps such as Uber and Ola, or radio cabs, which are a more efficient choice in larger cities. To get a rough estimate of fares in advance, try the portal www.taxiautofare.com.



Health Requirements: The WHO recommends the following vaccinations for India: hepatitis A, hepatitis B, typhoid, cholera, yellow fever, Japanese encephalitis, rabies, meningitis, polio, measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis), chickenpox, shingles, pneumonia and influenza.

All tourists entering India must produce a COVID-19 Negative PCR Test Report (done within 96 hours by an accredited laboratory) at the time of boarding and at the port of arrival. Furthermore, tourists have to undergo a RT-PCR test or GeneXpert test on arrival at the airport. In future, the vaccination of COVID-19 would be a prerequisite for travellers enterina India. Up-to-date information can be obtained from the Ministry of Civil Aviation, India. (Web: https://www. civilaviation.gov.in/en)

Working Hours:

Monday to Friday 9am to 5.30pm Saturdays and Sundays are weekly holidays.

Public Holidays:

- Republic Day
 Labour Day
 Independence Day
 Gandhi Jayanti
 Guru Nanak's Birthday
 Christmas Day
- January 26 May 01 August 15 October 02 November 25 December 25

Subject to Change

- Shivaji Jayanti,
- Good Friday & Easter Sunday
- •Eid ul Fitr, Eid ul Azha & Ramadan
- •Ganesh Chaturthi, Dushera, Holi, Diwali

Medical Tourism: India is one of the top 10 medical tourism destinations in the world. Modern healthcare facilities, skilled doctors and low cost of treatment have made India a popular hub of medical tourism attracting a large number of patients every year. India also provides E-Medical Visa and E-Medical Attendant Visa facility, medical travellers from 166 countries can arrive in India through the 26 designated airports and five designated seaports with E-Medical Visa.

WHERE TO GO IN INDIA?

ANCIENT CITIES, CULTURAL LEGACY & NATURAL SPLENDOUR

The Taj Mahal, Agra: Perhaps India's most recognizable building, named after Mumtaz Mahal, the favourite wife of Emperor Shah Jahan. Taj Mahal, one of the wonders of the world and a prominent sight in India, reflects the distinctive features of an entire era of India. The Taj Mahal is located on the south bank of the Yamuna River in the city of Agra.

The Holy City of Varanasi: Varanasi is one of the most vibrant



and interesting places to visit in India. From women dressed in bright saris that line the Ganges for a sunrise bathing, to the cultural traditions passed on for centuries. The city is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world and is not only the spiritual capital of India, but also the holiest of seven sacred cities in Hinduism, it also played a significant role in the development of Buddhism.

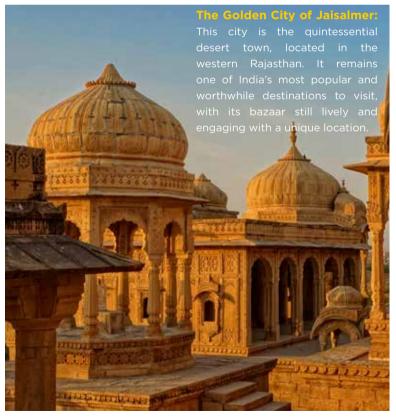
The Red Fort: Being the historic mark of India's independence from British rule, the Red Fort in Delhi is a politically significant monument which now acts as the setting for India's Independence Day celebrations each year. Today, the Red Fort of Delhi has become one of the biggest tourist destinations, where thousands of tourist and travellers from the world visit throughout the year.

The Gateway of India and Mumbai City: The Gateway of India that was built in the 20th century, is one of the biggest tourist attractions of Mumbai. The building stands beautifully overlooking the Arabian Sea and the location of this building is what makes it so attractive.



Mecca Masjid: The Masjid is one of the iconic landmarks built in the early 16th century, and attracts both tourists and pilgrims from all over India and the world. Visitors will be amazed to know that the soil used in making the bricks for the central arch of the mosque was brought from Mecca (the holiest place in Islam).

Akshardham Temple Complex: It is a stunning piece of architecture in Delhi. Sprawled over a vast area, the complex looks like a splendid heavenly city when viewed from above. The temple itself has been constructed in pink sandstone and marble, and is laid amidst neatly manicured lawns.



The Beaches of Goa: Goa, the smallest state in India is famous for its beaches and places of worship. Tourists and travellers, mostly from Europe and other regions of the world arrive in Goa in winter, whilst the summer and monsoon seasons see many Indian tourists. The Churches and Convents of Goa have been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Goa is no less than a paradise when it comes to water sports activities.

Periyar National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary: One of South India's most popular tourist attractions, Periyar National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary is centred on a lake built by British engineers in 1895 for irrigation and to provide water to the city of Madurai. Established in 1934, this beautiful park is home to numerous species of mammals, including a large free-roaming Indian elephant. wild boars, otters, the lion-tailed macaque, and more than 20 Bengal tigers.

Agra Fort: Often described as the walled city, is a UNESCO World Heritage site, built in the year 1573 during Akbar era. Today, the fort is a major tourist spot and attracts many tourists from all over the



world. Agra Fort is known for its rich history. The fort is separated from its sister monument, the Taj Mahal by just 2.5 kilometres.

Ajanta & Ellora - The Finest Tourist Attractions in Aurangabad: Aianta and Ellora evoke a true sense of wonder in every visitor who is lucky enough to visit. The Aianta Ellora caves are located at two different sites, in close proximity within Maharashtra, leaving for tourists a lot of ground to explore. The Aianta & Ellora caves were made between 5th and 10th centuries CE. People from all around the world come to visit these caves for their rich historical significance and grandeur.

Bodhgaya, the Sacred Place of Enlightenment: Bodhgaya, considered the world's holiest Buddhist site is located at the northeast of the Indian state of Bihar. It attracts thousands of visitors each year, all drawn to participate with the resident monks in meditation and prayer. Constructed in the 6th century and restored numerous times since. the temple is topped with a beautiful pyramidal spire and houses a large ailded statue of Buddha.

The Meenakshi Amman Temple: Imagine approaching a temple complex where you are greeted by a soaring gateway more than fifteen stories tall, covered in 1500 brightly painted sculptures of divine and demonic figures. It's overwhelming and disorienting, but it is just a taste of what awaits the pilgrim or sightseer at the Meenakshi Temple in the town of Madurai in Southern India.



Mehrangarh Fort. Jodhpur: Built on a hill and 400 feet above the city, the fort is an epitome of grandeur and royalty. It is one of the largest and most beautiful forts of India. Inside the fort are magnificent palaces made of intricately carved panels and traditional latticed windows and doors.

Mysore Palace: The sprawling city of Mysore is a delight to explore with a mix of fine old colonial architecture; regal Indian palaces: and lush. well-manicured gardens. Those who are inclined towards shopping will enjoy spending time in the city's famous silk and sandalwood bazaars. The beautiful three-story palace is designed with elegant square towers and domes. For a real treat, be sure to catch one of the splendid light displays held each Sunday and during holidays, when the palace is illuminated by more than 90,000 lights.

Jaipur: Also known as 'Pink City' of India, along with Delhi and Agra, forms India's Golden Triangle, which is the most popular tourist circuit in India. This capital of Rajasthan is also a gateway to other tourist places like Aimer. Pushkar. Chittorgarh. Udaipur. Jodhpur, Jaisalmer and Mount Abu in the state. Amer Fort or Amber Fort is the principal tourist attraction located high on a hill and 11 kilometres from Jaipur.

Victoria Memorial: It is a large marble building in Kolkata, built between 1906 and 1921; it is dedicated to the memory of Queen Victoria. Now, it is a museum and a popular tourist spot under the Ministry of Culture.

Howrah Bridge: An iconic landmark of Kolkata, Howrah Bridge is a massive steel bridge constructed over the Hooghly River. What makes this bridge unique is the fact that it was built without a single nut or bolt and is held together by rivets.

Ajmer Dargah: This Dargah is one of the most visited places of Ajmer, a Sufi shrine which is believed to be one of the holiest places in Rajasthan. Khwaia Moinuddin Chishti, who was a Persian Sufi saint, is enshrined in this place owing to his secular preaching's. Moinuddin Chishti was a 13th-century sufi mystic saint and philosopher. Local and national rulers come to pray here. The dargah grew in popularity and size over the years. The dargah has been a site for pilgrims from around the world belonging to Hinduism. Islam, Jainism and Sikhism,

The Golden Temple of Amritsar: The Golden Temple, also known as Harmandir Sahib, meaning "abode of God" or Darbār Sahib, is a gurdwara located in the holy city Amritsar of Punjab. Everybody, regardless of cast, creed or race can seek spiritual solace and religious fulfilment without any hindrance. It also symbolizes the distinct identity, glory and legacy of the Sikhs.

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Manali: With jaw-dropping views, forests. lush areen sprawling meadows carpeted with flowers, blue streams aushina and a persistent fragrance of pines. Manali popular hill station in the state of Himachal Pradesh. in India, has been blessed with extraordinary scenic beauty. From museums to temples, from quaint little hippie villages to bustling upscale streets, river adventures to trekking trails. Manali has every reason to be the tourist magnet it is. all vear round.



Khandala: A popular hill station states of Maharashtra in in India and 80 Km far away from Mumbai. Khandala provides for a perfect weekend respite for the Mumbai population, with its scenic valleys, grassy hills, serene lakes and misty waterfalls. Due to this easy accessibility, it is a popular hiking spot from nearby cities and is among one of the perfect hill retreats for both trekkers and young couples.

Udaipur: Also known as the City of Lakes, is the crown jewel of the state of Rajasthan. It is surrounded

by the beautiful Aravalli Hills in all directions and surrounded by four lakes, making this city as lovely as it is. The city has an abundance of natural beauty, mesmerizing temples and breathtaking architecture which makes it a must visit destination in India.



Darjeeling: It is one of the most beautiful hill stations in Eastern part of India. Spread over a steep mountain ridge, nestled amidst acres of lush green tea plantations, Darjeeling stands at the height of 2,050 meters above sea level, thus boasting of cool climes all year round. This scenic hill station is the perfect getaway for a romantic honeymoon and is just around 700 kilometers away from Kolkata.

Shimla: The hill station known for its rich colonial history, is the capital city of Himachal Pradesh state. The hill station is famous for its Mall road, the Ridge, toy train etc. among honeymooners and families alike. The weather is pleasant for most of the months with tourists flocking especially during the summer months.

THINGS TO DO IN INDIA

INDIAN CUISINES TO GET YOU DROOLING!







Traditional Indian food has a richly deserved reputation as one of the world's great cuisines. The cuisine of each geographical region embraces a wide assortment of dishes and cooking techniques, reflecting the varied demographics of the ethnically diverse Indian subcontinent.

Bengali Food: Bengali cooking is refreshing for its remarkable utilization of panchphoron, a term used to refer to the five essential spices, namely mustard, fenugreek seed, cumin seed, aniseed, and black cumin seed. The specialty of Bengali food lies in the perfect blend of sweet and spicy flavours.

Gujarati Food: The traditional Gujarati food is primarily vegetarian and has a high dietary benefit. The typical Gujarati thali consists of varied kinds of lipsmacking dishes. Gujarati food has such a huge amount to bring to the table and each dish has a totally extraordinary cooking style.

Kashmiri Cuisine: Kashmiri food that we have today in the restaurants has evolved over the years. Exceptionally influenced by the traditional food of the Kashmiri Pundits, it has now taken a portion of the highlights of the cooking style received in Central Asia, Persia and Afghanistan.



Mughlai Cuisine: Indian cuisine is overwhelmingly inclined by the cooking style practiced during the Mughal period. Mughlai cuisine comprises of the dishes that were prepared in the kitchenettes of the royal Mughal Emperors.

Punjabi Food: The cooking of Punjab has a massive range of delightful vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian dishes. Punjabi food is usually relished by people of all communities. In Punjab, home cooking differs from the restaurant cooking style.

Rajasthani Food: The cuisine of Rajasthan is primarily vegetarian and offers a fabulous variety of mouth-watering dishes. It is influenced by its rich heritage. The spice content is quite high in comparison to other Indian cuisines, but the food is absolutely scrumptious. Dal Bati Churma, Mohan Thaal, Gatte, Laal Maas, Mawa Kachori, Mirchi Bada are the iconic dishes of Rajasthan that you must try.

South Indian Cuisine: The cuisine of South India is known for its light, low calorie appetizing dishes. The traditional food of South India is mainly rice based. The cuisine is famous for its wonderful mixing of rice and lentils to prepare yummy lip smacking Dosas, Vadas, Sambaar, Idlis and Uttapams.

Drinks: Tea is a staple beverage throughout India. Different varieties and flavours of tea are prepared all over the country. Another popular beverage, coffee, is largely served in South India. One of the finest varieties of Coffea arabica is grown around Mysore, Karnataka, and is marketed under the trade name "Mysore Nuggets." Indian filter coffee, or kaapi, is especially popular in South India. Other beverages include nimbu pani (lemonade), lassi, chaach, badam doodh, sharbat (juice prepared from fruits or flower petals) and coconut water.

Indian Sweets and Desserts: These are called "Mithai" a delightful element in Indian cuisine. Many Indian desserts are fried foods made with sugar, milk or condensed milk. Ingredients and preferred types of dessert vary by region.



What to buy?

Rajasthan is famous for the colourful handcrafted knick and knacks. This culturally rich state of India has its market stocked with precious and semi-precious stones, paintings, brass items, paper mache puppets, colourful lehenga cholis, juttis or mojaris, traditional umbrellas, soft blankets and much more. Blue Pottery is widely recognized as a traditional craft of Jaipur. The name 'blue pottery' comes from the eyecatching cobalt blue dye used to colour the pottery.

In Uttar Pradesh marble items are sold, especially near the whitemarble mausoleum, the Seventh Wonder of the World; the Taj Mahal. Some of these marble-goods are adorned with inlaid work with semi-precious stones, detailed carvings etc. Kanpur on the other hand is one of India's major production areas for leather. Other than this, this city is known for its silk saris. **Maharashtra** is famous for grabbing Himroo sarees, bedsheets, shawls etc. especially in Aurangabad, for which the city is acclaimed.

Punjab's phulkari print in clothing is a must-grab. From suit pieces to wall hangings, these brightly coloured prints are just what you need to add a happy feeling in your life. **Bihar** stands out with its wood carving and folk-art paintings. In **Himachal Pradesh**, you can buy lovely woollen clothing, silver jewellery, Tibetan rugs etc.

Tamil Nadu's Kanchipuram silk sarees are amongst India's finest sarees. Terracotta products such as bowls, figurines and wall hangings are among the million things West Bengal masters in. Moreover, this state has beautiful tea-gardens.

ECO AND ADVENTURE TOURISM

EXPLORE THE LAND OF ANCIENT WONDERS AND NATURAL BEAUTY

With a plethora of exciting engagements in the country, adventurous sports are bound to continue gaining admiration. From exquisiteness to thrill, you will experience everything.

Camel Safari: A Camel Safari in the Thar Desert is one of the most famous adventure holiday activities in India and in the entire Asia. A safari would give tourists a chance to explore camel treks, including the ones that pass across the sand dunes in Jaisalmer.



Jeep Safari: In India Jaisalmer is the place where tourists can enjoy this adrenaline adventure. A 4×4 SUV is led in the desert, sitting inside which tourists experience the dashing of sand coming its way.



River Rafting Adventure: The large rivers of the country including the Brahmaputra, Ganges, Yamuna, and the Kali have aggressive rapids that allow tourists to enjoy thrilling river rafting experiences. Paragliding in Bir Billing: If tourists want to go paragliding in India, Bir Billing in Himachal Pradesh is the first place they should be considered.

Elephant Safari: India is home to the Asian tiger and elephant. There are a large number of tiger reserves and national parks that make elephant safari a leading adventure activity in the country. Tourists can enjoy this adventure in the Amber Fort in Jaipur and watch tigers from the safe height of sitting on elephant back.

Water Sports in South Goa: The South Goa beaches are famous for adventure activities and deserve a spot on your bucket list. Some of the most exciting sports activities are parasailing, jet ski ride, banana ride, bumper ride, speed boat ride, dolphin spotting and sightseeing and kavaking tour.





India can be a wee bit unnerving for the first-time visitor. The lifestyle and culture are totally different from the West. The following is a list of some important Do's and Don'ts for hassle-free and enjoyable travel in India.

- Don't use your left hand to eat or pass things to others.
- · Carry proper maps of the places proposed to visit in India.
- Try to reach a station during the daytime if traveling without a guide.
- Always use the tourist assistance desk for proper advice.
- Don't photograph women without permission and also don't show affection to them publicly.
- Do not ever enter a temple, tomb, Dargah or Gurudwara with shoes on and/or scantily dressed. One should cover his/her head with a cloth while in a Gurudwara or Dargah.
- Do not wear black clothes while visiting a Jain temple. Leather articles are forbidden to be carried in Hindu and Jain temples.
- Taking photographs of the deity in a temple is normally not permitted.
- While changing money, insist on getting encashment certificate.
- Don't drink alcohol near temple areas. Do drink bottled mineral water.
- Don't point your toes or finger at people in India.
- Don't ignore your body language while in India. Don't expect people to give you personal space or que.



IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Ministry of Tourism, Room No.125, Transport Bhawan, 1, Parliament Street, New Delhi - 110 001, India | Website: http://tourism.gov.in

 Tourism Office (Delhi),
 Indiatourism DELHI,
 Indiatourism,
 88
 Janpath,

 New Delhi,
 110
 001
 Tel:
 0091
 11-23320342
 / 23320005
 / 23320008

 Fax:
 0091
 11-23320109
 Email:
 goitodelhi@nic.in

Tourism Office (Karnataka - Banglore / Bengaluru), Indiatourism BANGALORE / BENGALURU, 10th Floor, Sir Visvesvaraya Kendriya Bhawan, Domlur, Bengaluru, 560 071 Karnataka | Tel: 0091 80-29513031 / 29513032 | Email: indtour@kar.nic.in

Bureau of Immigration, East Block –VIII, Level -2, Sector -1, R.K Puram, New Delhi-66 | Tel: 0091 11-26711384 | Fax: 0091 11-26711348 Support Centre: 0091 11-26711443 / 0091 11-26713851 Email: frrodli@nic.in / Support Centre: frrodli.support@nic.in Website: https://boi.gov.in/

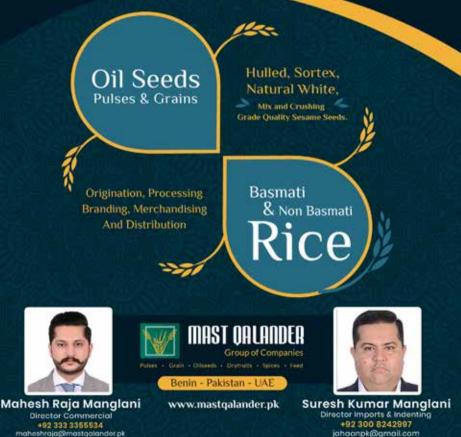
Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, North Block, New Delhi-110001 | Tel: 0091 11-23092849 | Fax: 0091 11-23092890 Email: ajit.m@gov.in | Website: http://www.cbic.gov.in/index

Local Emergency Phone Numbers: Ambulance - 102 | Fire - 10 | Police - 100/112

INTRODUCTION

The "Mast Qalander Group- Pakistan" Is Recognized As An Entity Of Principles, Dignity And Professionalism And Plays Strategic Role In In The Imports, Exports, International Brokerage And Intermediary In The Raw And Processed Agricultural Commodities, Also Trading Value Chain Including Origination, Processing, Branding, Merchandising And Distribution, Thereby Reaping Operational Synergies And Cost Efficiencies Transferring Final Benefit To End User

Mast Qalander Group- Pakistan Is The Prominent Exporter Of Finest & Premium Quality Agro Commodities from Pakistan, Mast Oalander Group Is Ranked Amongst The Prestigious Companies Dealing In Agro Commodities And Member Of Rice Exporters Association Of Pakistan REAP, Karachi Chamber Of Commerce And Industry, Global Pulse Confederation And An ISO 22000:2005 Certified Company Having Modern And Sophisticated Facilities As Per European Standards, Having Capacity To Produce Significant Quantities And Including Grading, Color Sortex, De-Stoning, Polishing, Sorting, Uniformity And Blending,



maheshraja@mastqalander.pk

⁶⁵ WEARING A GARLAND OF ISLANDS WITH CRYSTAL BLUES, BEING THE NATURE'S GARDEN OF RADIANT COLOURS, SHE IS A PARADISE ON EARTH SMILING WITH HEAVEN 33



MALDIVES



Surrounded by crystal blue seas, white sandy beaches and underwater coral worlds, Maldives is a mesmerizing archipelago, a cluster of bewitching islands that touch the rainbow colours of heavenly sky. Rich with diversity, green forests and vegetation, colourful shades of elegant flowers, secret caves and radiant fishes, mysteries of deep-water lives, this nature's garden flourishes with beauty inviting the hearts of people to experience her charm.



JOURNEY THROUGH MALDIVES

Official Name	Republic of Maldives
Government	Unitary Presidential Republic
Capital	Malé
Area	298 km² (115 sq. mi)
Population	515,696 (World Bank 2018)
Religions	Islam
Languages	Dhivehi English
Literacy Rate	98%
Currency	Maldivian Rufiyaa (MVR)
Time Zone	GMT+5:00 Hours
Electricity	Standard Voltage - 230 V Frequency - 50 Hz

GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW

Maldives is a cluster of small islands, an archipelago, in South Asia, located in the Arabian Sea of the Indian Ocean. The archipelago is situated towards the southwest of India and Sri Lanka. Maldives is a group of atolls in the Indian Ocean about 417 miles southwest of Sri Lanka. The country consists of 1,192 coral islands formed around 26 natural ring-like atolls, spread over 90,000 square kilometers.

Only 200 Islands are inhabited and about 90 islands serve exclusively as resort islands whereas the rest are uninhabited or used for agriculture and other livelihood purposes. From a bird view, these coral islands make spectacular patterns against the depth of the Indian Ocean. This place witnesses the merging of enchanting beaches, crystal clear waters and the blue sky creating a deeply peaceful and serene atmosphere.

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HISTORICAL BACKDROP

It is assumed that the Maldives Islands were formed about 100.000 years ago. The earliest known history of the Maldives is recorded in the copperplate documents known as "loamaafaanu", according to which it seems that the islands of Maldives were first settled by Aryan immigrants around 500 BC. Further migration from South India, as well as Sri Lanka, occurred. The latest archaeological findings suggest that the islands were inhabited as early as 1,500 BC. Around 947 AD, recorded contact with the outside world began with the Arab travelers. Along with the description of the exotic paradise islands and expensive natural resources, the news must have been taken home by travelers resulting in the arrival of more ships bearing traders and other travelers. Ever since the Maldives embraced Islam in 1.153. Islam has been central to the life of Maldivians. After their conversion to Islam, the formerly Buddhist kings of the Maldives became sultans. The sultans ruled without foreign meddling until 1,558 when the Portuguese appeared and established a trading post in Maldives. By 1573, however, the local people drove the Portuguese out of Maldives.

In the mid-1600s, the Dutch, established a presence in the Maldives, however the British ousted the Dutch in 1796, and made it a part of a British protectorate to run the country's diplomatic and foreign affairs. The British governor of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) also served as the official in charge of the Maldives. This protectorate status lasted until 1953. Beginning on January 1, 1953, Mohamed Amin Didi became the first president of the Maldives after abolishing the sultanate. In 1968, the Islamic Republic was proclaimed. Today, Maldives is a modern democracy that is proud of its history and culture while forgoing ahead in the race for development.

MAJOR ATTRACTIONS OF MALDIVES



Culture: A beautiful slice of paradise in the Indian Ocean. the Maldives is fascinating а destination. Steeped in rich customs and tradition. the Maldivian culture is heavily shaped by Indian, Sri Lankan, Malaysia, Arab. Persian. Indonesian and even African influence. Maldivians are incredibly warm, welcoming and friendly people who will go above and beyond to make your holiday truly unforgettable.

After tourism, the fishing industry drives the economy in the Maldives. You can expect to eat a lot of fresh tuna, snapper and lobster as well as a whole host of international cuisines on offer at your resort. Traditional Maldivian food is hot and spicy and features a lot of curries, soups and dishes served with rice. Coconuts, yams, mangoes and pineapples are also locally grown and super delicious.

Dhivehi is the national language of the Maldives. Dhivehi is an Indo-Aryan language originating from the Sinhalese language of Sri Lanka. English is the second most popular language in Maldives, widely used in education, commerce and tourism sector. **Beauty & Splendor:** The islands of Maldives lie scattered like a string of pearls in the Indian ocean. Of the 1,200 islands, only 200 are inhabited out of which around 90 are tourist resorts. The destination is also one of the best places in the world for water sports such as snorkeling and scuba diving, providing spectacular views of the underwater paradise vibrant with color and marine life.

Music and Dance: Experience the beat of Maldives! The most popular and the most broadly known form of music from Maldivian tradition is Bodu Beru, which is intensely influenced by their surrounding countries. Bodu Beru is a dance melody, starting with a moderate beat and leading to a frantic and wild beat. It is generally performed by large groups of 15 to 20 men. including instrumentalists. choruses and dancers. Many of the resorts organize regular cultural performances to amuse their quests, so be sure to check one out on your holiday visit to Maldives.

Traditional Dress: The Maldives is an extraordinary vacationer magnet that impresses a lot of tourists with its traditional attires. Males wear a sarong and white cotton shirt, while females wear a traditional Maldivian dress "Dhivehi libaas" which is a long dress embellished with gold or silver coloured threads.

Maldivian

Handicrafts:

Craftsmanship is a social legacy, which is passed from generation to generation. A range of handiworks from decorative wooden Lacquer articles to Dhoni's (small wooden boats) are the highlights of Maldivian handicrafts. Furthermore, embroidery (kasabu boavalhu libaas). woven mats and various jewellery, beautiful lacquered vases have a status of fineness.





Flora & Fauna: The enchanting island chain of Maldives edged by the Indian Ocean is naturally deepened with a lavish green plant life. A huge part is covered with thick woods, and the presence of plenty of tropical trees such as breadfruit, mango, banana, bamboo, coconut palms, plantain and banyan make the islands of Maldives picture-perfect.

The Maldives, being an oceanlocked nation, primary parts of it is aquatic and has an unbelievable variety of 2000 species ranging from turtles, whales, sharks, dolphins and tiny colorful reef fish to moray eels. Maldives islands with a diverse ecosystem are home to the giant fruit bats, endemic toad, shrews, lizards, skinks, geckos, birds, and more.





REVELS & FIESTAS

Ramadan is observed by Muslims in Maldives and worldwide in the nine month of the Islamic calendar, honoured as the month of fasting, prayer, reflection and community.



Kuda Eid (Eid-UI-Fitr) is the first day of the month of Shawaal in the Islamic Calendar. This follows the end of Ramadan and is a period of feasting. At homes, feasts are prepared and family, friends and neighbours are invited. Kuda Eid is celebrated for a period of three days during which public holiday period is observed.

Bodu Eid (Eid –ul –Azha) falls on the 10th day on Dhu al-Hijjah in the Islamic Calendar. This is the longest holiday during the year and people make preparations well in advance to visit their friends and relatives on other islands. The holiday period is between five to seven days.

Prophet Muhammad's Birthday

is celebrated by Maldivians as with all Muslims in the world. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) birthday is the 12th day of Rabiul-Awal in the Islamic Calendar. Families invite one another to their homes to share the special dishes prepared for the day.

Independence Day is annually celebrated on 26th of July. The

highlight of the day is the official celebrations held in the evening at the Republic Square in Malé. These events are interceded by the passing of floats and processions depicting traditional and modern themes.

Republic Day is celebrated on 11th November every year in commemoration of the fact that on 11th of November 1968 Maldives became a Republic for the second time. The day is celebrated with parades and marches.

National Day celebrates the great victory of Mohamed Thakurufaanu over the Portuguese in 1573. The National Day is celebrated on 1st of Rabi-ul-Awal, the third month in the Islamic Calendar.



HOW TO GET THERE?

Welcome to the Garland of Pearls, the Shining Islands of Maldives

Entry & Visa Formalities: Free 30 days Visa upon arrival for all visitors. No prior visa is required to enter the Maldives and entry permits will be granted on arrival based on immigration requirements.

AIRPORT INFORMATION

Velana International Airport is the main international airport in Maldives. It is located on Hulhule Island in the North Malé Atoll, near the capital island Malé. Male airport is the main gateway into the Maldives islands for tourists.

On arrival at Velana International Airport (VIA), it is essential to fill the landing card, which is distributed by the crew of the flight. Alternatively, the cards can be found immediately at immigration booths.

To obtain immigration clearance, it is required to show proof of a valid booking at a hotel/resort or an address for lodging

Duty-free shopping is available at the departure terminal at the VIA. Products include souvenirs, perfume, electronics, toys, watches, fashion accessories and jewellery, liquor, tobacco, and confectionary.

Transportation/Transfer: Most of resorts and live-aboard safari boats offer an airport welcome and collection service. Seaplanes and speedboats are also available to get to the resort. The resorts offer such arrangements for tourists. the airport jetty to the capital Male every 15 minutes which changes to one every 30 minutes after midnight. There is a set charge per person for the ferry service during normal operating hours and another set charge per person at midnight.

Security: Malé is a relatively crime-free city. However, petty crime exists, though minimal, and one needs to be careful and use common sense.

Visa Regulations: A 30 day free visa is issued on arrival for all nationalities. However, full 30 day visa is not a right of the passenger to claim, but lies at the discretion of the Immigration to issue not more than 30 days and any period less than 30 days.

- Should posses a valid international travel document/ passport issued by the government of a sovereign state.
- Have a valid ticket to continue the

journey out of Maldives.

- Have enough funds to cover the expenses for duration of the stay in Maldives.
- A Tourist Visa may be renewed if the person concerned, applies to the Immigration before the expiration of the visa already granted. Before the extension, Immigration will re-asses the incumbent's financial position for the stay period of the extension.

Custom Formalities: The import of Religious materials offensive to Islam, Idols for worship, pornographic materials, narcotics and psychotropic substances and live pigs, arms and ammunition, alcohol and spirits, pork and its by-products, dogs and dangerous animals are strictly prohibited.

TRAVELLERS' ESSENTIALS



EXPLORE THE UNIQUENESS OF THE ISLANDS OF MALDIVES

Climate: Maldives specializes in the winter sun which shines throughout the vear. making the peak season December to April, when the islands enjoy the dry monsoon with little rain and lower humidity. February to April is the hottest period and almost all resorts operate at full capacity during this period. Mid-December to early January comes at a premium due to Christmas and New Year Holidays and prices are steep. Easter and the Italian holiday week in August also attract peak prices at most resorts, especially the Italian-oriented ones.

From May to November storms and rain are more likely. It's still warm, but skies can be cloudy and the humidity higher. This is the low season, with fewer people and lower prices, with the exception of August. Ramazan is a time to avoid as restaurants are closed.

What to wear: Dress is generally casual. T-shirts and cotton clothing are most suitable. Being an Islamic country, it is also recommended for women to wear modest clothing without baring too much. It is better for tourists to have a few pairs of shorts, three quarter length trousers, sarongs, some sun dresses or skirts, t-shirts with long sleeves, and hats when visiting the islands. The only footwear that is likely to be needed are flipflops or possibly low sandals. The vast majority of islands have sand pathways making the wearing of heels difficult and occasionally dangerous.



Accommodation: Maldives offers holiday makers and tourists the best accommodation in the finest hotels and resorts, equipped with modern and stunning facilities. Some of the resorts allow tourists the opportunity to experience the Maldivian life at more affordable rates. Below are the finest hotels in Maldives that offer tourists the best accommodation and the most stunning and exotic sights.

- Coco Palm and Spa (Dunikolu Island Baa Atoll)
- Hilton Maldives (South Ari Atoll)
- Paradise Island Resort (North Malé Atoll)
- Royal Island Resort (North Malé Atoll)
- Royal Island Resort (Baa Atoll)
- Sun Island Resort (South An Atoll)
- Taj Exotica Resort & Spa (South Ari Atoll)
- Vilu Reef Resort Maldives (Meedhuffushi, Dhaalu Atoll)Villa Hotels (Malé)
- Embudu Village (South Malé Atoll)
- Sun Island Resort & Spa (South Ari Atoll).

It is recommended that beach villa type accommodation would be more convenient as water bungalows have special arrangements for travelers with special needs and for young children.

GETTING AROUND



Resorts often organize island hopping trips where tourists visit series of inhabited islands. If tourists need lengthier trips, they need to catch one of the island's scheduled ferries from Male.

Travelling by speedboat, too, is on its own a fun adventure. When the speedboat roars cleanly over the deep blue water, tourists can feel the salt on their lips, the sun on their faces, and the wind tugging their hair into frenzy. Dhoni, the local boat used for travelling by locals is a more gentle, but by no means a less enjoyable means of getting to where tourists want to.

Seaplanes are often used as a quicker option by tourist resorts located in atolls further from the airport. The Maldivian Air Taxi and Trans Maldivian Airways operates these seaplanes. Catching a seaplane is a rare treat that adds an extra layer to your experience of Maldives by putting its unique geography into perspective through cottony layers of cloud. Flying over the islands at low heights tourists can see the shapes of reefs and colours of shallow waters around every island, and, if the trip is timely, perhaps even a couple of dolphins crossing the atolls channels.

Malé is most famous for its motorbikes, the fastest way to get around. Taxis are easily available in Malé. Tourists could always take the easier option and walk anywhere in Malé.

Travel Insurance: It is hard to imagine anywhere much safer than Maldives. However, it is better for tourists to have adequate health insurance. It may cover expensive evacuations by seaplanes or speedboats, water skiing and diving risks. An extra premium is required for these activities.

Health Requirements: The only vaccination officially required by the Maldives is one for yellow fever, if tourists are coming from an area where yellow fever is endemic. Malaria prophylaxis is not necessary. All tourists entering the Maldives must produce a COVID-19 Negative PCR Test Report (done within 72 hours by an accredited laboratory) at the time of boarding and port of arrival.

All passengers must undergo thermal screening at the arrival terminal. In the future, the vaccination of COVID-19 would be a prerequisite for travellers entering Maldives. Up-to-date information can be obtained from the Ministry of Tourism, Maldives (Web: https:// www.tourism.gov.mv/). **Currency:** The Maldivian currency is the Rufiyaa and Laaree. One Rufiyaa is equivalent to 100 laarees. Rufiyaa bank notes come in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100 and 500. However, the US Dollar is the most commonly used foreign currency.

Business Hours: From Sunday to Thursday 07:30 - 14:30 in the government sector and generally from 09:00 to 17:00 in the private sector, although most offices in the private sector open for a half day on Saturday. Weekend falls on Friday and Saturday.

Public Holidays

- New Year's Day
- National Day
- The Day Maldives Embraced Islam
- Labor Day
- Independence Day
- Victory Day
- Republic Day

1 January 24 January 29 March 1 May 26 July 3 November 11 November

Subject to Change:

These days are subject to the appearance of moon as per Islamic Calendar.

- Eid Mawlid al-Nabi (Holy Prophet (PBUH) birthday)
- Eid al-Fitr (Ramadan ends)
- Victory Day
- Hajj Day
- Eid al-Adha
- Islamic New Year

Medical Services:

Almost all the resorts of Maldives have a clinic with basic facilities and a doctor on call. International reputable hospitals and dispensaries are available in the populated islands of Maldives.

WHERE TO GO IN MALDIVES?

Malé: The capital of Maldives, is the most favorite gateway for honeymoon seekers, couples, and water sports lovers. It is a natural paradise with lavish island canopy and scenes of incredible landscapes that are an absolute treat for the eyes as well as the senses. Malé is home to several beautiful buildings and striking mosques, as well as lively markets, shops and cafés, offering plenty to see and do.

Malé Friday Mosque: The Male Friday Mosque also known as Malé Hukuru Miskiy is an ancient decorated mosque located in the city Malé. The mosque has a high vaulted, stepped and intricately adorned ceiling with fine-looking, culturally significant carvings. This also led to the mosque being listed as one of the tentative UNESCO World Heritage Cultural Sites in 2008.



Sinamalé Bridge: The amazing feat of engineering also known as China-Maldives Friendship Bridge is upheld by vast concrete supports that have been planted in the seabed to connect Malé to the airport island of Hulhulé and Hulhumale. The 1.39 km long bridge has two car lanes and separate lanes for motorcycles, and pedestrians.

Grand Friday Mosque: The Grand Friday Mosque in Malé is an attraction that, with its towering golden dome, gathers the attention of all visitors. The architecture, white marble side walks and stairs give the elegant building a royal feeling. The site also includes a coral stone minaret that dates from 1675.



Presidential Palace: It is the official residence of the President of Maldives and is located in front of the Hukuru Miskiiy. The



Presidential Palace symbolizes an exclusive colonial architecture built by Sultan Md Shamsuddeen III for his family. You can look at the external excellence of this wonderful structure which is also on the list of one of the best tourist spots in Maldives.

National Art Gallerv: The National art gallerv was established in 1999 in Malé, which is an ancient building comprising of well-maintained collection of some breathtaking and amazing local and international artifacts. It has amazing collections of Islamic items, local, royal and traditional Maldivian dresses. If you want to delve into the artistic colour, this is an apt spot to drop in.

Sultan Park: Sultan Park is located in the center of Male Island. It used to be the seat of the Sultan's Palace. Although there is only a small building left in the park, the ancient building is completely preserved. There are lush green onion trees everywhere. The air is fresh and the scenery is beautiful, making people feel like they entered a natural green field.

Jumhooree Maidhaan (Republic Square) of Maldives:

The splendid Jumhooree Maidhaan, also identified as Independence Square or Republic Square is frequented by foreign visitors as well as local residents. It is a popular place for informal get-togethers as well as political demonstrations and it is considered to be a trendy place to spend time and socialize. Fish Market: This is the soul of Malé and its great fun watching the day's catch being brought in from the adjacent fishing harbour. Look out for some truly vast tuna, octopus and grouper. Tuna is the most popular fish for sale, but you'll find some other types as well. Visitors enjoy watching the workers clean different types of fish. The Malé Fish Market is located along the inner harbor on the north side of the island, just west of Republic Square.

Tsunami Monument: The Tsunami Moment is a free standing memorial to the victims of the devastating 2004 Tsunami. The monument stands as a beacon of hope for the Maldivian nation. The 20 steel spheres encircling the monument symbolize the atolls of the country, while the rising pillars stand for the waves of the tsunami. The rods of the structure pay homage to the victims of the disaster and the names of the 74 victims are carved on the edifice.



Villingili Island: It is one of the largest and most vegetated islands in the Maldives, being the venue for Maldives only golf course. Guests on the island have many restaurants, bars and lounges to enjoy. Those seeking a more unique experience have private dining available in locations of your choice across the island. It lies about two kilometers west of Malé island and is reachable via local ferry service that operates 24 hours, between Malé and Villimalé.



Hulhumale Island: It is а wonderful mix of the nostalgia of the past and the excitement of things to come. The entire island spreads over a huge 188 hectares and is made up of a superb blend of metropolitan and island life. Hulhumale is also the home of the Velana International Airport, which is the main door to the paradisiacal islands for most. It is a reclaimed island located in the south of North Malé Atoll.

Maafushi Island: The Island lies on the Eastern rim of South Malé Atoll. Maafushi is a romantic destination known for its beaches. It offers a choice of accommodation, convenient travel to and from the airport and a variety of eateries. The island destination comes up with all the options for watersports, diving, and excursions that a guest may want to appreciate when in the Maldives.

Banana Reef (North Malé Atoll): The amazing Banana Reef is one of the oldest reefs and first dive site discovered in the Maldives. It is adorned with magnificent caves, majestic cliffs, attractive coral growths and amazing shades. Banana Reef is also populated by sharks, barracudas, and groupers, making Banana Reef one of the world's most popular dive sites. Tourists can go scuba diving in these magical waters or even try snorkeling by the northern end of the reef.

Addu Island: The second biggest city of Maldives, the Heart-shaped Atoll, lies in the southernmost tip of the Maldives and is located at a distance of 537 km from Malé. It is home to some of the most diverse natural habitats in the country. With its large islands, unique geography, flourishing population and long history and culture, Addu stands out as a destination that seamlessly marries nature with development.



THINGS TO DO IN MALDIVES



Maldives Cuisine: Since Maldives almost 99% sea, it is not is surprising that fish (mainly tuna) is the staple of the Maldivian diet. The cuisine found in the island nation is a mix of Arabic. Indian. Sri Lankan and Oriental influences. But the ninety odd tourist resorts scattered throughout the islands host diverse international menus. so it's entirely possible to eat your way around the world while staying in luxury at one of these resorts. Of course, seafood plays a starring role, regardless of which country's techniques are on display, but those who prefer their food to come from dry lands will still have plenty of options.



Coconuts are another major part of many dishes in Maldives and can be served in grated form, as milk or as coconut oil which is used to deep fry foods. Favourite fish include skipjack tuna, little tunney, yellowfin tuna, frigate tuna, bigeye scad, wahoo and mahi-mahi.

The wealth of resort dining options in Maldives means some unique dining opportunities as well. Several resorts feature underwater restaurants to truly 'immerse' diners in what Maldives is all about. Some resorts also attract celebrity chefs or hold cooking classes for that extra special experience.

ADVENTURE TOURISM IN MALDIVES

Whale Submarine Tour: A visit to the Maldives is not complete without experiencing the amazing underwater world of the Maldives, in an exclusive deal with Tourist Submarine Maldives Pvt. Ltd. It's a great opportunity to see closely passing tropical fish, sea turtles appearing frequently black corals, underwater caves and much more. 99% of the Maldives is water and if you haven't visited the underwater world, you have missed the most exciting views and creatures that inhabit the seas of Maldives.





Scuba Diving: Scuba Diving is a very popular adventure tour in Maldives owing to the abundance of coral reefs and thriving flora and fauna. Popular tourist destinations in Maldives operate daily flyboat, banana boat and other sailing activities that enhance the excitement on a Maldives tour.

The bay is a known area for sighting Dolphins too. Many tour operators organise sunset and Dolphin sighting tours regularly apart from the normal Island hopping tours.

Cruise the Islands of Maldives:

Cruising in Maldives is one of the best ways to truly experience the unique splendour and tranquility of this tropical paradise. Experience it all by cruising to a variety of these jewels in the Indian Ocean, eating on beautiful beaches, embarking upon night explorations and more.

Dive Safari: The warm seas of Maldives have high visibility

throughout the year, with water clear enough to see the passing fish as far as fifty metres away at times. The best channels for diving in Maldives with reef sharks are at Lhaviyani, North and South Malé, Vaavu, Meemu, Laamu and Gaafu (probably the best). Elsewhere the channels are too deep to dive.

Canoeing: The molokini canoe is a thrilling way to discover marine life without actually snorkeling, as visitor can view the ocean's floor, reefs and fish through its transparent bottom and sides.

Surfing: Enjoyed by enthusiasts all over the world, surfing is a favorite hobby of many Maldivian locals. It is among the most popular Maldivian water sports for tourists.

Wind Surfing: Also known as sailboarding. Windsurfing is one of the most challenging sports in Maldives, but learning is half the fun. Kite Surfing/Kite Boarding: Using a small surfboard or a "kite board" with its attached sail or kite is an exhilarating activity that takes advantage of wind to jump, fly and ride over land or water. The warm and comfortable climate gives kite surfers the ability to enjoy the beautiful white sand beaches and blue-green lagoons on a whole other level.

Snorkeling: The clear, warm water and diverse marine life make snorkeling in Maldives one of the best sites in the world. The countless reefs throughout the Atolls offer a unique experience.

Fishing: Waters in Maldives are endowed with a huge collection of unique species of fish like groupers, tuna, emperors, dolphin fish barracuda, squirrelfish, rainbow runner and lots of other types of exotic fish that make the land a prime fishing spot.

Underwater Photography:

Diving in the Maldives is an amazing experience. Maldives is one of the best places to photograph the thriving marine life. The 'Thillas' and 'shoals' in the atolls abound in colourful fish and corals provide divers with an opportunity to take wonderful pictures. Underwater cameras can be rented from most dive schools in Maldives, though the exact equipment might not be available. Enjoying the evenings in the local Islands: For travelers who love the sun and water, Maldives is one of the best places to visit. Its setting makes for a perfect refuge for the people who want to take a break from the stressful hustle and bustle of everyday life. It is the ideal vacation spot where they can do nothing but enjoy and relax.

When the day is about to end, the waters of Maldives take up a golden colour, which create interesting illusions which visitors can watch while sitting on the beach. The evenings are very romantic and captivating.



Maldives Wildlife: Maldives has a wide variety of seabirds. terns, tropicbirds, frigate birds, shearwaters and skuas are all present in numbers at different seasons. Green hawksbill and olive ridley turtles are all regulars.

SHOPPING & LEISURE ACTIVITIES

What to buy? Malé has incredible commercial activity. From local road markets, high-end boutiques, to small scale souvenir stores and shops, your shopping needs will be fulfilled and your experience will leave you hypnotized.

Wooden boats also known as Dhonis, wooden ashtrays, wicker mats, coconut products, lacquer products, colorful island fabrics, organic cosmetics and fridge magnets are the most famous things to buy in Maldives.

Best places for shopping in Maldives are the following:

- Majeedhee Magu (To buy clothes, cosmetics, accessories, electronics)
- Malé Local Market (To buy fruits, pickles, dry fruits, local snacks, coconut milk and desserts)
- Chaandhanee Magu & Orchid Magu (To buy local handiworks and souvenirs)
- Le Cute (Duty free shop to buy cosmetics, toiletries, health care products and perfumes)
- STO Trade Centre (To buy souvenirs)
- Island Bazaar (To buy elegant European style clothes, handicrafts and fridge magnets)
- Oevaali Art Shop (To buy paintings, sculptures and souvenirs)







Excursions: Most resorts in Maldives offer a range of excursions and a variety of evening entertainment. Many also provide romantic sunset sailing or adventurous island hopping in catamarans or small dhonis. For honeymooners most resorts offer special candlelight dining options, desert island picnics and other arrangements

DON'T FORGET TO HAVE A GREAT TIME!



SOME DO'S & DON'TS TO FOLLOW

- A handshake is the customary salutation.
- Visitors must bear in mind that the Maldives is an Islamic country and appropriate dress is necessary. Dressing skimpily in the resorts is fine, otherwise dress conservatively when out of the resort. Tops should cover your shoulders and knees should be covered. It applies to both males and females.
- Divehi is the language spoken in all parts of the Maldives. English is widely spoken by Maldivians. Most resorts have multi lingual staff who speak English, German, French, Italian and Japanese.
- Do not forget to take lots of sun cream, swimwear, sandals and books.
- Do not miss out unique opportunity of excursions, snorkel safaris, dive courses and spa activities.
- Visitors should conduct personal religious practices in the comfort of their rooms.
- And lastly... Don't forget to have a great time!

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC)

2nd Floor, H. Zonaria, Boduthakurufaanu Magu, Malé, Maldives Tel: 00960 3323228 | Email: info@visitmaldives.com Website: https://visitmaldives.com/en

Ministry of Tourism

5th Floor, Velaanaage, Ameer Ahmed Magu, Malé 20096, Maldives Tel: 00960 3022200 / 00960 3022207 / 00960 7223131 / 00960 9423131 Email: aishath.susan@tourism.gov.mv / info@tourism.gov.mv Website: https://www.tourism.gov.mv/

Maldives Immigration

Head Office, First Floor, Velaanage, Ameer Ahmed Magu',Male', Maldives Tel: 00960 3330478 / 00960 9555222 | Email: bureau@immigration.gov. mv / airport@immigration.gov.mv | Website: https://immigration.gov.mv/

Trans Maldivian Airways

Velana International Airport, P.O. Box 2023 Male', Maldives Tel: 00960 3312 999 / 00960 3312 777 Email: dayresnorth@transmaldivian.com | dayressouth@transmaldivian.com Website: https://www.transmaldivian.com/

Maldives Customs Service

Boduthakurufaanu Magu, District: 20-02, Postal Code: 20250, Maafannu, Male', Maldives | Tel: 00960 3322001 / 00960 3334193 Email: info@customs.gov.mv / admin@customs.gov.mv Website: https://www.customs.gov.mv/

Important Hotlines

Ambulance: 102 | Fire & Rescue: 118 | Police: 119 | Coast Guard: 191 Flight Information: 00960 3322211 | Weather Forecast: 00960 3320021



⁵⁵ THE LIGHT OF WISDOM, FLOWERS OF PEACE AND THE ART OF MOUNTAINS IN THE LAND EVERLASTING ³³



FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF



Woven with colorful blossoms, she is the garland of knowledge, peace and sacred hills. She is indeed the beautiful curtain of prayer flags fluttered over continuous mountains that range to infinity. Being sublime yet silent serenity, her name is none other than Nepal, the land of mystical Himalayas. Becoming one of the most spectacular travel destinations under the sun, Nepal is nothing but a wonderful fusion of glorious mountains, medieval cities and sacred sites, hill villages and jungle wildlife.



JOURNEY THROUGH NEPAL

Official Name	Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal
Government	Federal Democratic Republican Parliamentary System
Capital	Kathmandu
Area	147,181 km² (56,827 sq. mi)
Population	28.09 Million (World Bank 2018)
Religions	Hinduism (81%) Buddhism (9%) Islam (4.4%) Kiratism (3%) Christianity (1.4%)
Language	Nepali (official)
Literacy Rate	67.9% (2018 Provisional)
Currency	Nepalese Rupee (NPR)
Time Zone	GMT+5:00 Hours
Electricity	220 Volts, 50 MHZ-AC Frequency - 50 Hz



Squeezed between the Tibetan plateau and the plains of the Indian subcontinent, the modern-day giants of China and India, Nepal has long prospered from its location as a resting place for mountain admirers, travelers, explorers and pilgrims.

Nepal is renowned for its regal mountains, magnificent landscape and unparalleled picturesque natural beauty. Nepal with an area of 147, 181 sq. km is located in South Asia between China in the North and India in the South, East, and West. Nepal has an assorted topography; altitude ranges from 60 m above sea level to elevated pinnacles, including Mount Everest (8,848m). Nepal can be divided into three distinct geographical regions: Himalayan region, mid hill region, and Terai region. Each region has a distinctive climate, people, weather and lifestyle.



Nepal has seen many rulers and ruling dynasties. The earliest rulers were the Kirantis who ruled from 9th century B.C. to 1st century A.D. Legends and chronicles mention that the Indian Emperor Ashoka had come to Nepal and visited Lumbini, the place where Lord Buddha was born, and there he erected a huge stone pillar to commemorate his visit to that sacred place.

The Kirants were replaced by Licchavis who, according to the earliest evidence in inscriptions of the 5th century A.D. found in the courtyard of Changunarayan temple which is about 15km northeast of Kathmandu, ruled this country from 1st century to 9th century A.D. This period is noted for the many temples and fine sculptures built around the Kathmandu valley.

The Licchavis were followed by the Thakuris, then came the Malla dynasty. In the 14th century A.D., King Jayasthiti Malla established a rigid social order. His grandson tried in every way to protect his country from suspected enemy states. Unfortunately, all his efforts were fruitless as everything went beyond his control and the country eventually divided up into 50 small feudal states including the three major ones in the valley.

Then came the Shah dynasty. King Prithvi Narayan Shah, who annexed small principalities including three states in the Kathmandu Valley and unified Nepal into a single kingdom. Recognizing the threat of the British Raj in India, he dismissed European missionaries from the country and for more than a century, Nepal remained in isolation. During the mid 19th century Jung Bahadur Rana became Nepal's first prime minister to wield absolute power. The Ranas were overthrown in a democracy movement of the early 1950s. Nepal was declared a Federal Democratic Republic state on May 28, 2008, during the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly. It was previously a multiparty democracy since 1990.

MAJOR ATTRACTIONS OF NEPAL

One of the fascinating approaches to comprehend the excellence and lavishness of Nepali culture is through its celebrations. During festivals in Nepal, cultural dances, melodies and exhibitions are performed. These cultural treasures make festivals interesting and entertaining. Festivals are scheduled in accordance with the Nepali calendar and the phase of the moon, so they may vary within the relevant month with respect to the Gregorian (western) calendar.

Culture: The diversity in terms of ethnicity and religion make a room for various sets of customs. The vast majority of these traditions trace back to the Hindu, Buddhist, or other religious civilizations. Nepal's culture is prominently influenced by its architecture, religion, literature and music.

The official language of Nepal is Nepali, also known as Gurkha which is spoken throughout Nepal as well as in parts of Bhutan and India. The second most spoken language in Nepal is Maithili, while Bhojpuri is the third most spoken language in Nepal.

Nepal is also known as The Land of the Gurkhas who are acknowledged for their bravery, loyalty and honour. The Nepalese culture is indeed exciting and diverse.

Archaic Cities & Sacred Sites: With an ideal mix of Hinduism and Buddhism in Nepal, there is an abundance of religious architectural marvels in the country. Some having а solid linkage to the Ramayana and some being simply stunning in





excellence. The sanctuaries in Nepal are an absolute must-visit when in the country.

Architecture: The superlative architecture of Nepal is a form of art which justly captures the spirit of Nepal. Traditional Nepalese architecture attracts both sightseers and researchers. Most of the historical buildings and unique architectural explorations indicate that Nepal specifically Kathmandu city is the oldest city in Asia. Nepal's architecture is categorized in three non-specific stylistic groups, namely pagoda style, stupa style and shikhara style which are prominent among the significant structures in the country.

Nepali Handicrafts: The

Nepalese handicrafts are as acknowledged the best handmade crafts from the 'Roof of the World'. The streets of some renowned tourist spots can be seen flooded with Thanka paintings (Tibetan paintings on cotton/silk cloth), Pure Pashmina shawls, Tibetan singing bowls, metal and wood carving crafts, traditional Tibetan rugs, Khukuri (an iconic weapon of Gorkhali warriors) and Nepali masks. Nepal surprisingly has a lot of variety of handicraft products that have massive demand in the national and international market.

Nepali Folklore and

Mythology: Nepal's folklore plays an imperative role in society. Nepali folklore and mythology provide readers and audience with wide-ranging lives of the different ethnic gatherings as well as Nepal as a whole. Such folktales can reveal much about tradition, activities, emotion, superstitions, customs and inhibitions. Like any culture with a rich history, Nepal has no shortage of a supernatural undertone to amaze tourists and locals alike.

Mountain Highs: The Nepal Himalaya is a conclusive end for mountain lovers. The heroic scale of the Everest and Annapurna mountain ranges naturally make these the two most iconic and accessible regions for trekking in Nepal. Some of these routes, for example, the Everest Base Camp Trek and the Annapurna Circuit, are viewed as being among the best strolls on the planet. Nowhere else would vou be able to travel for quite a long time in unfathomable mountain view, knowing that a hot meal, cozy lodge and warm slice of apple pie await you by the day's end.





A fascinating approach to grasp the excellence and lavishness of Nepali culture is through looking at its celebrations. During festivals in Nepal, cultural dances, melodies and theatre are performed. These cultural treasures make festivals interesting and entertaining. Festivals are scheduled in accordance with the Nepali calendar and the phase of the moon. Many tourists prefer visiting Nepal during the festivals to witness the grandiosity of the events.

Dashain: One of the most auspicious and widely celebrated Hindu festivals of Nepal. It is a celebration of good prevailing over evil. Most families offer male goats, ducks, chickens, eggs and coconuts to the goddess Durga. People return to their home villages and spend the fifteen-day festival with their families, friends, and exchange of blessings.

Tihar: Tihar is Nepal's second most grand festival, after Dashain. In each of the three days, a different deity is worshipped: on the first day the crow, the messenger of Yama (the bringer of death); on the second, dogs, which are believed to be Yama's custodian; and on the third, the goddess Lakshmi is worshipped, the bringer of wealth. Lakshmi is worshipped by lighting houses with oil lamps, candles and colorful lights.

Mahashivaratri: 'Shivaratri' means the 'night of Lord Shiva'. It is celebrated on the 14th day of the dark fortnight of the Māgha month, as per the Hindu lunar calendar. The best place to witness the festival is at the Pashupatinath temple of Kathmandu, where thousands of devotees (Sadhus) visit the temple, stay up all night and pray to Lord Shiva. Pashupatinath is considered the Guardian and Protector of the Kathmandu Valley and Nepal.

Holi: Also recognized as Hori or Faguwa, it is one of the most prominent and enjoyed festivals in Kathmandu. A carnival takes place on the day of Holi in the Basantapur Durbar area as it's a popular spot. Synthetic colours are the integral part of the festival which are available cheaply anywhere in Kathmandu. Red is the primary colour of the festival, and without it, the celebration is not so lively.

Lhosar: The New Year festival is celebrated by the Sherpa community of Nepal. is celebrated by dance, music, family gatherings, and exchange of greetings and gifts. Families pray together during this festival and cook special foods for gods and goddesses. During this time, major Buddhist monasteries and stupas like Swavambhunath. Boudhanath are decorated with praver flags.

Gai Jatra: Among the widely celebrated festivals of Nepal. Gai Jatra also known as the festival of cows is celebrated to commemorate the death of people during the year. As part of the festival, every family who has lost a member, in the previous year, is supposed to lead a carefully and intricately decorated cow through the city. In the absence of a cow, a young boy dressed as a cow is considered a fair substitute.



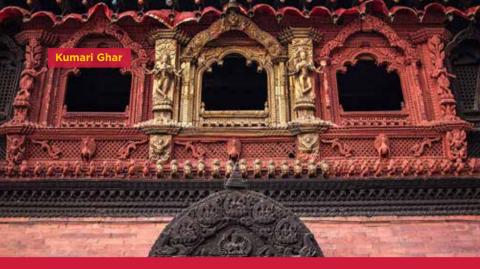
Nepali New Year (Bisket Jatra): This is a weeklong festival which takes place in Bisket Jatra, Bhaktapur. It marks the ancient solar Nava Barsha (New Year). A huge chariot carrying the god Bhairab is pulled through the streets, ending with a chariot battle at Bhaktapur's Khalna Tole.

Buddha Jayanti: It is believed that Buddha was born in Nepal on this day hence Buddhists from all over the world visit Nepal to celebrate this festival. Buddhist temples like Swyambhunath, Boudhanath and other temples all over Nepal are decorated with butter lamps on this day.

Naag Panchami: It falls in the middle of the monsoon. It is a Hindu festival that worships the serpent god, Naag. Pictures of Naag are posted in doorways, and milk is offered to him. It is believed that worshipping Naag protects against snake bites. This festival marks respect to serpents as the water guardians, and to ensure regular rainfall in the Kathmandu Valley.

Janai Purnima: It is a sacred thread festival which celebrates love and purity. On this day, people share gifts and greetings and Hindu men perform their annual change of Janai (the sacred thread). Nepali people who observe this event put a scared thread around their wrist.

Ghode Jatra: Ghode Jatra is the festival of horses that takes place at Tundikhel, in the Kathmandu Valley and is celebrated to ward off the demonic Gurumapa. Ghode Jatra, the Horse Racing Day falls in mid-March or early April.



Kumari Puja: The word 'Kumari', originally, comes from the Sanskrit word 'Kaumarya', which means a princess. In the Kathmandu Valley, a young Newari girl called Kumari or Kumari Devi is adored as a transcendent god.

She lives in the Kumari Ghar, a relatively small palace, in Basantapur. It is believed that she has forces of premonition and the capacity to cure the sick, satisfy specific wishes, and bestow blessings of protection and thriving. Kumari is worshipped on events like Durga Puja, Navaratri, and so forth. The most ideal chance to observe the worship of the Kumari goddess maybe during the Indra Jatra when she is paraded all through the city. On the chariot of Lord Indra and Kumari, the living goddess sits in her golden cart.



Indra Jatra: The eight-day long Indra Jatra celebration falls in September and is one of the most enchanting and honored festivals of the Newar people of the Kathmandu Valley.

It starts with the erection of a wooden pole made of pine at Basantapur Square before the old Hanuman Dhoka Palace. For the pole-raising ceremony, several observers assemble at the Palace Square and on the surrounding temples. The chariot of Kumari, the Living Goddess, is taken out in a procession through the main streets of Kathmandu. On each night of Indra Jatra, the sanctuaries and ancient palace buildings around Kathmandu Durbar Square glow with oil wicks.



Entry Procedure & Visa Rules: Tribhuvan International Airport is the only international airport of Nepal. Immigration Office, TIA (Tribhuvan International Airport) under the Department of Immigration has been facilitating tourists flying to Nepal by providing Visa on Arrival. Likewise, other Entry and Exit points established at the border regions also provide 'On Arrival Visa' to foreign nationals hoping to enter Nepal via land.

'On Arrival' visa procedure is quick and simple. You can expect some queues during peak tourist season. If you wish to skip those queues, you can also consider getting visa from the Nepalese Diplomatic Missions stationed abroad prior to your arrival. The choice is yours.

If you have obtained visa from Nepalese Diplomatic Missions, then you must enter Nepal within six months from the visa issued date. Your total stay is counted starting from the day you enter into Nepal.

On Arrival Visas are 'Tourist Visas'. They bear multiple re-entry facility. Tourist Visa 'On Arrival' is the only entry visa to Nepal. Even if you are visiting Nepal for the purposes other than Tourism (sightseeing, tour, travel, mountaineering, trekking, visiting friends and families), you should obtain a 'Tourist Visa' to get into the country. However, you must change the category of visa as per your purpose and length of stay in Nepal from the Department of Immigration by producing required documents.

Visa Fee

Single Entry (Subject to change):

- o 15 Days 30 US\$
- o 30 Days 50 US\$
- o 90 Days 125 US\$



Gratis Visa (Visa for Free): Gratis Visa is issued to SAARC member countries, free of cost on their first visit to Nepal in a calendar year, except to citizens of Afghanistan. Afghan citizens are eligible for Visa on Arrival only upon the recommendation of Department of Immigration. The Afghan citizens can request concerned institution inviting them to Nepal for necessary paperwork with Department of Immigration to get you Gratis Visa 'On Arrival'.

Indian nationals do not require Nepal visa. On Arrival Visa can be availed by paying visa fee to the immigration desk at airport. The payment can be made in all major international currencies.

For further information please refer to the Department of Immigration Kalikasthan, Kathmandu. The contact details of the Department of Immigration are mentioned in the Important Contacts.

AIRPORT INFORMATION

Kathmandu Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA), is situated approximately 6km east of Kathmandu city which is in the



heart of the Kathmandu Valley. The airport provides various facilities to its visitors.

Custom Formalities: All personal belongings and luggage must be declared and cleared through the customs on arrival at the entry point. Personal effects are permitted free entry. Passengers arriving at Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) with no dutiable goods can proceed through the Green Channel for quick clearance without a baggage check. On the off chance that you are carrying dutiable articles, you need to go through the Red Channel for point by point customs clearance.

Pre-paid Taxi: Once you step out of the arrival gate the pre-paid taxi facility is on the left. If you wish to use this facility you can do so by paying in advance. The rates are noticeable as they are displayed on the board for your security.

By Road: Overland vacationers entering Nepal with their vehicles must have an international carnet.

TRAVELLERS' ESSENTIALS

Climate: In northern Nepal summers are cool and winters are severe, while in the south, summers are very hot and winters are mild to cold. Nepal has five seasons: spring, summer, monsoon, autumn, and winter.

Average temperatures in Nepal drop 6°C for every 1,000 m you rise in altitude. There is no seasonal constraints on traveling in and through Nepal. Even in December and January. when the winter is at its severest, there are compensating bright sun and brilliant views. As with most of the trekking areas in Nepal, the best time to visit is during spring and autumn. Spring is the time for rhododendrons to bloom while the clearest skies are found after the monsoon in October and November, However, Nepal can be visited whole year round.

Accommodation: The lodging Nepal varies from hotels in and apartments, to resorts and substantially more. So, to have guaranteed quality assistance, it is advisable to utilize the workplaces and services of government registered hotels, lodges, travel agencies and licensed tour guides Similarly, only. connect with authorized trekking guide or porter only through a registered trekking agency.

What to Wear? The climate is exceptionally diverse, contingent upon the season. Nepal is where you can encounter everything from blizzards to colossal warmth.

For women bare shoulders or kn ees will be seen as disrespectful and will make it nearly impossible to visit ancient ruins, temples, or UNESCO World Heritage sites. Many Nepali women wear the



traditional costumes of saris or a kurta, which is a long cotton shirt worn over matching leggings. In cities, young Nepali women wear western-style jeans with easternstyle moderate tops.

Health **Requirements:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) recommends vaccination for hepatitis A, hepatitis B, typhoid, cholera, yellow fever, Japanese encephalitis, rabies, meningitis, polio, measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis). chickenpox, shingles, pneumonia and influenza before Travelling to Nepal.

Widespread ongoing transmission of respiratory illness caused by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is occurring globally. All tourists entering Nepal must produce a COVID-19 Negative PCR Test Report (done within 72 hours by an accredited laboratory) at the time of boarding and port of arrival. All newly arrived travellers must undergo mandatory 14day quarantine. In the future, the vaccination of COVID-19 would be a prerequisite for travellers entering Nepal. Up-to-date information can be obtained from the Department of Immigration, Nepal. (Web: https://www.immigration.gov.np/)

Currency: Nepal uses the Nepalese Rupee. The present denominations of Nepalese currency in production are: Notes – 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 500 and 1,000 rupees; Coins – 1, 2 and 5 rupees.

The easiest way to access funds in Nepal is through ATM machines.

Credit Cards are accepted at major hotels, restaurants and shops as well as banks in Nepal.

Travel Insurance: Obtaining a travel insurance policy to cover theft, loss and medical problems is a rational idea when traveling to Nepal. There are a wide variety of policies available. Therefore, make sure that you select the most appropriate insurance policy you need.

Healthcare

Facilities:

Kathmandu has the best health care facilities in the country, but standards at clinics and hospitals decline as you move away from the capital. In mountainous areas, there may be limited health facilities. Trekkers who become unwell in the mountains are generally evacuated to Kathmandu, or overseas in the event of something really serious. Always use travel insurance to cover the costs of hospital treatment and emergency evacuations. Working Hours: Government offices are open from 10am to 5pm Sunday through Thursday in summer and from 10am to 4pm in winter and on Fridays Government offices open from 10am to 3pm and most private business offices including travel, trekking and tour agencies are open from 9am to 5pm Sunday through Saturday.

Public Holidays

 National Unity Day 	Jan 11
•Women's Day	Mar 8
•Labour Day	May 1
•Buddha Jayanti	May 16
•Nepali New Year	April 14
 Constitutional Day 	Nov 09
•Christmas	Dec 25

Subject to Change: Nepal follows Bikram Sambat as its national calendar and therefore festivals dates may change depending on lunar months dates. •Vasant Panchami

- •Shivratri (In order of Lord Shiva) •Teej (Festival of Women)
- •Indra Jatra (Festival of Rain God)
- •Dasain (Durga Puja Festival)
- •Gai Jatra (Procession of Cows)
- •Deepawali (Festival of lights)
- Martyr's Day
- •Holi

•Ghode Jatra (Festivals of Horses)

GETTING AROUND

Domestic Air Service: Nepal Airlines has an extensive network of air service to significant parts of the country. Other than Nepal Airlines, other domestic airlines (more than 18 in operation) provide regular and chartered services to popular domestic destinations. **City Buses:** Buses are the main form of public transport in Nepal and are comparatively cheap. Tourist bus services provide easy transportation to prime areas within the three cities of Kathmandu valley.

Car Rentals: There are vehicle rental booths at the air terminal in the appearance corridors to assist you to hire a car. International services like Avis, Budget and Hertz will help you get a rental car.

Metered Taxis: Metered taxis are found in bigger towns, for example, Kathmandu and Pokhara, and these can be hired for both local and long-distance journeys. Metered taxis have black license plates while private cars that operate as taxis for long-distance routes have red or green plates.



WHERE TO GO IN NEPAL?



Explore the Splendour in the Land of Cultural Richness and Serene Mountains

Kathmandu: Kathmandu is a place where you find peace and comfort which makes it a perfect destination for relaxation. There are resorts in Kathmandu where you can enjoy luxury amenities and comfort at affordable prices. Kathmandu is also a great choice for adventure junkies as some of the greatest Himalayan treks have their trails lying close to the city.

It is the largest city of Nepal, a melting pot of cultures and a rich mix of the east and west, old and the new, where tradition jostles with modernity.

Durbar Square: It is considered a landmark historic attraction, surrounded by the ancient Newari architecture, high temples, popular shrines and the old royal palace. The splendid Golden Gate is a pictorial highlight of Durbar Square.

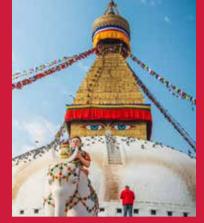


Swayambhunath Stupa:

Visitors, for whom the name was a tongue twister, have called it the "Monkey Temple" from the 1970s. Swayambhu, with a white dome stupa and an array of shrines, overlooks most parts of the valley giving visitors a panoramic view of the city. A large number of Buddhists and Hindus alike visit Swayambhu throughout the day. This shrine is perhaps the best place to observe religious harmony in Nepal.

Pashupatinath Temple: One of the holiest Hindu shrines, stretched across both the banks of the beautiful and sacred Bagmati River on the eastern fringes. In 1979, the magnificent temple was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

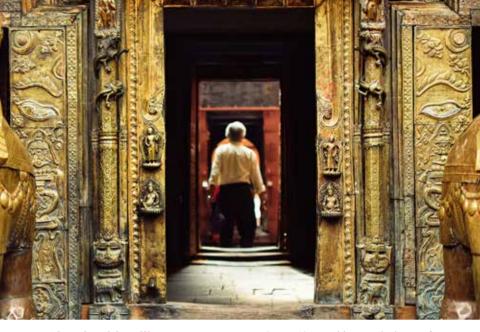
Thamel: One of the most popular and crowded commercial hubs in Kathmandu City of Nepal. Be it cultural monuments or pubs, cosy restaurants or magnificent temples, the narrow alleys of Thamel haven't



failed to serve the tourist industry of the country in over four decades. Whether you are looking for good food or clothes, new music albums or in the hunt for trekking gear, the street shops in Thamel have got you covered.

Asan Tole: It famous market street in the city of Asan, Kathmandu. The spoked juncture of the street is always bustling with people selling everything from vegetables and fish to clothes, jewellery and spices. It is a place where one can experience the daily life of Nepali people.





Chandragiri Hills: Chandragiri is a hill station inside Kathmandu valley that lies 7 kms away from Thankot and at an elevation of 2551 m. The hill provides panoramic views of Kathmandu Valley and the Himalayan ranges from Annapurna to Everest. Today Chandragiri hills is one of the most visited sites in the country.

Mahaboudha

Temple:

Mahaboudha temple is devoted to Siddhartha Gautama, the historical Buddha. It was built by priest Abhaya Raj of Patan. The temple is often called "The Temple of a Thousand Buddhas" because a Buddha image is engraved on every brick.

Lumbini "Birthplace of Buddha": Nestled in the Himalayas near the Indian border, the beautiful town of Lumbini is the birthplace of Lord Buddha. Lumbini is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and has a plethora of ancient stupas dating back to 2000 years, and monasteries that were built by past dynasties. People come here from all over the world to this abode of Buddhism to study scriptures, meditate, practice yoga, trek, learn more about Buddhism and find inner peace.

Bhaktapur: One of the most favourite tourist spots is Bhaktapur, a small town located less than an hour away from the giant, chaotic capital of Kathmandu. Bhaktapur is the third of the valley's medieval Newari cities. It is a UNESCO World Heritage site, and there are literally hundreds of examples of traditional Newari architecture here. If you're eager to try some of Nepal's most traditional and unique cuisine, Bhaktapur is a great place to do so.

National Museum of Nepal: Also known as the Rashtriya Sangrahalaya among the locals, the National Museum is one of the prime attractions situated in the capital city of Nepal, Kathmandu. Being the largest museum of the country, it plays an important role in nationwide archaeological works and development of museums.

The Mayadevi Temple: It is the most important and sacred site in the area. It houses the actual spot where Lord Buddha was born, to Queen Mayadevi, the wife of King Suddhodana of Kapilavastu. A stone marker can identify the birth spot. Other nearby significant attractions are the Bodhi Tree in Lumbini Garden, the Pushkarini, Sacred Pond and the Ashoka Stupa (Pillar), which was built in 249 B.C.

Nagarkot: UNESCO World Heritage site Located at a mere 28-kilometre drive away from Kathmandu, Nagarkot offers one of the best views of the Himalayas in the entire region as it has an altitude of 7000 feet (2000 metres)! Perched at the edge of Kathmandu Valley, Nagarkot gives you one of the widest panoramas of the Himalayan ranges. Patan: It is 5 km away from the capital city, Kathmandu, and is reached by crossing the Bagmati River. As you walk through the city, you still hear the tapping of tiny hammers as craftsmans work on statuette or ornaments. Patan is a city of 55 major temples, 136 Buddhist monasteries and its artisans known for their fine metal works.

Pokhara: Pokhara is a city on Phewa Lake, in central Nepal. It's known as a gateway to the Annapurna Circuit. a popular trail in the Himalavas. Pokhara has developed into an adventure tourism destination in the last decade, offering everything from ultra-light flights to paragliding, boating. hikina. ponv rides. bungee, zipline or simply relaxing at one of the several lakes in the valley. Besides the many activities to engage in around the city, a short hike to Sarangkot is highly recommended.

Janakpur (City of Ponds): Janakpur is a city in Nepal which is believed to be the birthplace of Goddess Sita and the place of her marriage with Lord Ram. Also known as the City of Ponds, Janakpur boasts more than seventy ponds that dot its verdant landscape. Here you can learn more about the ancient and revered Hindu epic, the Ramayana and its significance today.

Bouddhanath UNESCO Heritage Site: Bouddhanath is the center of Tibetan Culture in Nepal. The 36-meter high, the great majestic stupa of Bouddhanath is one of the largest stupas in South Asia and a very important sight to see in Kathmandu.

Visit the Garden of Dreams:

The Garden of Dreams (Swapna Bagaicha) is a neo-classical historical Garden restored beautifully in the midst of Kathmandu city, at the entrance to Thamel, within the Kaiser Mahal complex, the Rana palace. The Garden of dreams is also recognized as the garden of Six Seasons which was made by the late Field Marshal Kaiser Sumsher Rana (1892-1964) in mid-1920. The garden is decorated with statues of elephants, and flowers of different types which are the major attraction of the garden.

THINGS TO DO IN NEPAL

Unique Meals and Fascinating Hangouts: Nepal's most distinctive dishes are probably dal bhat (rice and lentils), tarkari and the popular momos (dumplings). Kathmandu has become the food capital of the world as the international cuisine that is available around the valley is quite impossible to find in any other city. Then there is the amazing variety of local cuisines such as Thakali, Newari and food of the ethnic minorities.

Himalayan Cuisine is something which is generally prepared at heights where winter makes its presence felt every year. Yak meat, Yak butter and Yak milk are something which are never left out!

Pahari cuisine which is served in traditional restaurant includes makai (maize), buckwheat (fapar) or kodo (millet) bread. These are served along with potato, green beans, cauliflower, pumpkin, daikon radish and dried green dishes. Besides lemon, curd and chilies are an integral part of these platters.

Lohrung Cuisine: Nepalese cuisine is Lohorung cuisine. It's the cuisine which makes the best use of locally found ingredients. Spicy and mouth-watering, some of the best names include Sel roti, Dhule Achar, Chamre Yangpen, Dibu, Saruwa.

*Since most of the Nepalese cuisines make use of meat and its various forms, make sure you know what is being served. Make a good inquiry about the meat



you are being served. If you are a vegetarian, then make sure you are dining out in purely Indian vegetarian hotels/restaurants.

Regional Drinks: Chai, Butter tea, Lassi, Raksi and Chang are the most popular drinks widely available in Nepal.

The Top Restaurants in Nepal are:

- Utse Restaurant (Asian, Vegan, Vegetarian, Gluten-free)
- Krisharpan Nepali Restaurant (Asian, Vegetarian)
- El Mediterraneo (Mediterranean, European, Spanish, Vegetarian, Vegan, Gluten-free)
- Bhojan Griha (Asian)
- Yangling Tibetan Restaurant (Asian)
- Saigon Pho (Asian, Vietnamese, Vegetarian)
- Café Soma (European, Vegetarian, Vegan, Gluten-free, Coffee, Tea)
- Chilly Bar and Restaurant (Indian, Asian)
- Jilbertito's Mexican Food (Mexican)



Nepal with its popular attractions is undoubtedly a great destination to visit in South Asia. As Nepal is abundant with mountains, plains, rivers, and jungles, there are a plethora of activities for adventure lovers in this bewitching land of Himalayas.

Trekking: Nepal is one of the easiest and most exciting places in the world to trek; nowhere else in the world you can comfortably walk for weeks carrying little more than a day pack. Trek to the Himalayas provides an opportunity to observe the culture and enjoy the beauty of nature.

Rafting: Nepal has a reputation for being one of the best places in the world for rafting, warm water, a subtropical climate and huge white sandy beaches that are ideal for camping add further to the appeal.

Mountain Flight: The mountain flight not only allows you to enjoy fantastic views but also helps you understand the geography of the country. Everest experience is a close-encounter mountain flightseeing tour. The flight usually lasts between 50 minutes up to an hour.



Bungee jumping: The first bungee jumping site is situated 160m over the wild Bhote Kosi River. It is located close to the Nepal-Tibet border, a three-hour bus ride from Kathmandu. The agency takes safety very seriously.



Mountain Golf: Golfina is emerging as a popular tourism activity in Nepal in recent years. Its golf courses have all the facilities in other golf courses in the world. Tourists can participate in the golfing events that are organized on a regular basis.

Fishing Trips: Approximately 118 varieties of freshwater fish are found in these Himalavan waters. The best season to go fishing on the white waters is before and after the monsoon from February till April and October and November.



Paragliding: Paragliding in Nepal is a seasonal sport; the flying season in Nepal commences in November. It is a good opportunity the to experience beautiful mountain sceneries, aerial view of the Himalayas, cities, valleys, lakes and much more

Mountain **Biking:** Nepal is a country of extremes with all suitable mountain biking trails according to the need of mountain bikers. The best time to go for biking in Nepal is mountain between mid-October and late March.



Jungle Safari in Nepal: Hub offers Jungle safari elephant back or Jeep rides at the Parsa Reserve. Roval Bardia National Park, Roval Chitwan National Park and Sukhlaphanta Reserve, all of which are located in the Terai plains of Nepal.

SHOPPING

The markets in Kathmandu and Pokhara sell a variety of interesting, colourful handmade products at cheap prices, which makes shopping way more fun. Not to mention, Indian Rupee notes of 50 and 100 are easily accepted in Nepal.

What to buy in Nepal?

Pashmina Shawls: The shawls happen to be one of the most sought-after products in Nepal. These are extremely warm and soft, and perfect for gifting purpose. Shop from stores that only sell Pashmina or visit a factory in Thamel.



Singing Bowls: It is great for meditation and is believed to have healing powers. A popular place to buy singing bowls is Thamel or Durbar Marg. They produce sounds and vibrations when hit or circled with a mallet. Those sounds and vibrations are supposed to help you relax. Khukuri (The Gurkha knife): It's an excellent souvenir. Popular places to buy Khukuri are the various handicraft and khukuri houses in Thamel, and around old King Palaces (Durbar Squares) of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur.



Handicrafts: Nepal is famous for its rich variety of handicrafts, the prices are very affordable so shop away and bring these works of art home and beautify your abode. Shops in Bhaktapur, Patan and Kathmandu offer a wide range of handicrafts.

CULTURAL DO'S AND DON'TS IN NEPAL

Nepal is a multi-cultural nation. People value their culture and customs. Some of their customs you may find interesting, some strange and others beyond scientific logic.

- 1. Namaste" is a common act done by putting the palms together in a prayer-like gesture to greet anyone in Nepal.
- 2. Before entering a Nepalese home, temple and monastery, remember to remove your shoes or slippers.
- Don't take photographs of locals, holy shrines & temples unless they have clearly given their consent.
- 4. Avoid eating with your left hand and beef is strictly prohibited among Hindus. Do not offer food from your plate, nor eat from a common pot, and avoid touching your lips to a shared drinking vessel.
- 5. While traveling, dress appropriately. Women should especially avoid dressing in skimpy outfits.
- 6. Develop a genuine interest to meet and talk to Nepalese people and respect their local customs.
- 7. Bargaining is very common in Nepal. You would often need to bargain while shopping and riding cabs in Nepal.
- Safety Guidelines: Tourists are advised to keep their valuable belongings and passports in their hotel safety deposit boxes. It is sensible to be extra cautious when moving around in the crowded places as theft of cash is possible.



IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Nepal Tourism Board, Tourist Service Center

Bhrikutimandap, Kathmandu, P.O. Box: 11018, Nepal Tel: 00977 1 4256909 | Fax: 00977 1 4256910 | E-mail: info@ntb.org.np Website: https://www.welcomenepal.com/

Department of Immigration

Kalikasthan, Dillibazar, Kathmandu, Nepal Tel : 00977 1 4433934 / 4429660 / 4438862 / 4438868 Fax : 00977 1 4433935 | Email: mail@nepalimmigration.gov.np Website: www.nepalimmigration.gov.np

Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation

Singhadurbar, Kathmandu, Nepal Tel: 00977 1 4211669 / 4211846 | Fax: 00977 1 4211758 / 4211992 Email: info@tourism.gov.np | Website: http://old.tourism.gov.np/

Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal

Kathmandu, Nepa | Tel: 00977 1 4262416 / 00977 1 4262532 Fax: 00977 1 4262324 | Email: dgca@caanepal.gov.np / trilochan. poudyal@caanepal.gov.np | Website: http://caanepal.gov.np/

Department of Customs of Nepal

Tripureshwor, Kathmandu, Nepal Tel: 00977 1 4117225 | Fax: 00977 1 4117218 Email: csd@customs.gov.np | Website: https://www.customs.gov.np/en/

Nepal Airlines Website: https://nepalairlines.com.np/home

Important Hotlines

Ambulance Service: 102 | Government Hotline: 1234 | Police Force: 1114 Police hotline: 1113, 100 | Tourist Police 4226359/4226403 | Fire: 101

TEXTILE

ABOUT GOHAR TEXTILE

Gohar Textile Mills is a vertically integrated textile manufacturing specialist working with retailers, distributors, hospitality and institutional wholesalers worldwide. Gohar Textile is specialized in Home Textile manufacturing covering wide range of products from Nursery/Baby articles to higher end Designer Bedding fulfilling its Corporate and Environmental Responsibilities.

HISTORY

In 1980, four family members opened their own textile company in the UK to fulfill demand in the textile industry. The ensuing success rapidly diversification into fashion bed linen and quilts for the retail market and the company acquired an enviable reputation within the textile industry for the quality of its products and efficiency of its service. By 1984 the company had grown and developed at such a phenomenal rate that further investment was made in latest machinery. Today, we have 6 factories and 3,000 staff members spread across 150 acres of land in Faisalabad. Pakistan combined with a manufacturing facility in Manchester, UK to ensure consistent output and quality. Gohar Textile is synonymous with.

GOHAR STRNEGTHS

Wide range of Home Textiles, which includes • Printed Bedding

- Plain Dyed Bedding
- Duvet Covers
- Comforters
- Curtains
- Mattress Protectors Cushions
- · Hospitality Range

Gohar Textiles has its own design development teams in Pakistan as well as in UK which makes it unique in industry.

FOCUS ON SUSUINABILITY

Gohar Textile is focusing on sustainable growth and innovation by maintaining a Green environment by following below steps:

- Use Certified Organic and BCI cotton in its Spinning Mills AZO Free chemicals
- · Wastewater treatment plant
- · Sky Light usage project

GOHAR has been at the forefront of commitment to Environment and sustainability from the purchase of raw material to the delivery of the product.

CONTACT US HEAD OFFICE:

208 Chak Road Zia Town, Faisalabad Pakistan T: +92 41 85207 71 F: +92 41 8520770 MILLS:

3-k.m.Chak Jhumra Road Khurrianwala, Faisalabad Pakistan T: +92 418520771F: +92419520770 E: gauhar@gohartextile W: www.gohartextile.com

** POEM OF COLOURS IN HEAVEN ON EARTH "



ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

C

Blessed with the charm of mountains, mysterious shades of Himalayas, glimmering long rivers, and majestic grandeur of Mughal art and architecture, the land of pure shines in glory everlasting. Snowcapped peaks and frozen lakes, flamboyant valleys and vibrant shores along with the ruins of ancient civilizations captivates the hearts across the globe. Happy be the bounteous realm, the people of this radiant paradise are full of faith, smiles and joy. Cultural richness mingled with intimate friendliness welcomes the visitors with profound love.



JOURNEY THROUGH PAKISTAN

Official Name	Islamic Republic of Pakistan
Government	Federal Parliamentary Constitutional Republic
Capital	Islamabad
Area	881,913 km²
Population	212.82 Million (World Bank 2018)
Religions	Islam (96.28%) Other Religions (3.72%)
Languages	Urdu (National) English (Official)
Literacy Rate	59.13%
Currency	Pakistani Rupee (PKR)
Time Zone	GMT+5:00 Hours
Electricity	Standard Voltage - 230 V Frequency - 50 Hz

GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW

Located in South Asia, Pakistan shares the eastern border with India and the northeastern border with China. Iran makes up the country's southwest border, and Afghanistan runs along its western and northern edge. The Arabian Sea is Pakistan's southern boundary with 1,064 km of coastline. From the mighty stretches of the Karakorum in the north to the vast alluvial delta of the Indus River in the south, Pakistan remains a land of high adventure and nature.

The great mountain ranges of the Himalayas, the Karakorams and the Hindukush form Pakistan's northern highlands of northwest Frontier Province. Punjab province is a flat, alluvial plain with five major rivers dominating the upper region eventually joining the River Indus flowing south to the Arabian Sea. Sindh is bounded to the east by the Thar Desert and the Rann of Kutch and to the west by the Kirthar range. Balochistan Plateau is an arid tableland, encircled by dry mountains. The country is composed of Federal Territory (the federally-administered Islamabad Capital Territory), four provinces and few autonomous administrative units. The four provinces includes Balochistan, Punjab, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Pakistan has one of the world's most rapidly growing populations. Its people are a mixture of many ethnic groups, a result of the occupation of the region by groups passing through on their way to India.

HISTORY OF PAKISTAN

Pakistan was a part of India before the partition. The Indian Subcontinent has a history of five millennia and was spread over the area of one and a half million square miles. This land has been a region of invasion either from the route of mountains or the sea, bringing new knowledge of different cultures, assimilating and mingling with the culture of people in the land. The invaders were the Aryans, the Dravidians, the Parthians, the Greeks, the Sakas, the Kushans, the Huns, the Turks, the Afghans, and the Mongols who all brought their unique cultures with them and the cultural amalgamation gave rise to a new Indian Civilization.

The unique land of Pakistan serves as the gateway of South Asia and the Middle East to Central Asian countries. The British colonized the Subcontinent and ruled for nearly 200 years and then the Muslim revival began towards the end of the last century when Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, a renowned leader, and educationist, launched a movement for intellectual renaissance of the Indian Muslims. In 1930, the well-known poet and philosopher, Dr. Mohammed Iqbal conceived the idea of a new country (Pakistan) on a religious basis, and in 1940, the All-India Muslim League adopted the famous Pakistan Resolution. After several years of untiring struggle, under the brilliant leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah (the Founder of Pakistan), Pakistan emerged on the world map as a sovereign state when British India was partitioned into two independent states, India and Pakistan.



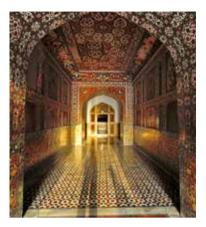
MAJOR ATTRACTIONS OF PAKISTAN

Culture: Cultural outlines of Pakistan speak aloud of its rich moral legacy and ethnicities. Pakistan is portrayed as a cultural mosaic, where conservatism and traditionalism reside side by side with secularism and liberalism. Pakistani culture is known for its magnificence, simplicity, firm beliefs and noble deeds and ideas. Be it the richness, variety, or diversity, Pakistani culture presents a charismatic bouquet of colorful flowers

Mystical Sufism & Shrines:

Sufism has a celebrated history in Pakistan and evolving for over 1,000 years. The presence of Sufism has been a leading entity increasing the reaches of Islam throughout the subcontinent. Today, there are thousands of Sufi shrines and mausoleums which speck the scene of Pakistan. Some famous Sufi Shrines in Pakistan includes:

The "Daata Darbar" in the city of Lahore, Punjab province, Shrine of "Lal Shabaz Qalandar" in Sehwan Sharif. Sindh province. Shrine of "Abdullah Shah Ghazi" in Sindh province, Karachi, Shrine of "Sheikh Rukn-ud-Din Abul Fateh". "Baha-ud-din Zakariva". "Hazrat Muhammad Shah Yusaf Gardezi" and "Shams-i-Tabrīzī or Shams al-Din Mohammad" in City of Multan, Punjab province, "Syed Jalaluddin Surkh-Posh Bukhari" "Hazrat Syed Jalaluddin Husain Bukhari







Makhdoom Jahanian Jahangasht" and "Tomb of Bibi Jawindi" in Uch Sharif, Bahawalpur, Punjab province, are among notable shrines in Pakistan. **Music:** Music has been a soul mover since the beginning of human civilization. Pakistani music is generally categorized as folk, classical, semi-classical (ghazal and geet), qawwali, pop, rock and contemporary (including electronic). 'Fusion' is a newer term widely used for any type of music that combines folk or classical music with electronic instruments or guitars.

Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and Abida Perveen are considered to be timeless and popularly known as King of Qawwali and Queen of Sufi respectively. Nazia Hassan, a Pakistani pop singer-songwriter enjoyed widespread popularity across South and South East Asia as "Queen of Pop" in South Asia.



The Folklore of **Pakistan:** Pakistani folklore encompasses the folk songs, folktales, fantasies, legends, customs, proverbs and traditions of the four provinces and numerous tribal areas that make up the modern nation of Pakistan. Pakistani folklore is shaped both by the dialects and traditions of the various ethnic groups that make up the population, and by the religious convictions of the people

in each region. Pakistani folklore offers valuable historical evidence of religious and ethnic migrations and of cultural influences.

Hub of Ancient Civilizations: The land is also host to Indus Valley Civilization such as Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa and Taxila, to the Himalayan hill stations. The north part of Pakistan has many old fortresses, ancient architecture and the Hunza and Chitral valley, home to small pre-Islamic Animist Kalash people community.

The romance of the historic Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province is timeless and legendary. Punjab province has the site of Alexander's battle on the Jhelum River and the historic city Lahore, Pakistan's cultural capital, with many examples of Mughal architecture such as Badshahi Masjid, Shalimar Gardens, Tomb of Jahangir and the Lahore Fort. The cultural and physical diversity of Pakistan has developed the country into a tourist hot spot for foreign travelers as well as adventurers.





Want to really get to know about Pakistan? Attend a festival! Here are some festivals that we find particularly exciting and worth travelling for. Don't forget to mark your calendars.

Eid-ul-Fitr: The biggest Muslim festival celebrated all over Pakistan is Eid-ul-Fitr. The day marks the end of Ramadan and the beginning of the month of Shawwal. It starts with the special prayers and people exchange gifts and sweet with each other and alms to the poor and the needy.

Eid-ul-Azha: Another massive religious festival commemorating the great sacrifice offered by Prophet Ibrahim (A.S). It is celebrated on the 10th of Zilhaj, the 12th month in the Islamic Calendar. Collective prayers are offered and the sacrifice of goats, sheep, cows or camels is made and the meat is distributed among relatives, friends and poor.

celebrated on 14th of Shaaban, the 8th Islamic month. Prayers, fireworks, exchange of sweet dishes and visits are fascinating in this festival.

Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi: It is a celebration of the birth of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on 12 Rabi-ul-Awwal is celebrated with religious zeal and fervor throughout Pakistan. Pakistani cities become awash with color as strings of lights and garnishments brighten up buildings and winding streets in the week before the holiday. Fireworks are lit, joyous parades occur, and cakes are baked to celebrate the Prophet's day of birth.

Shab-e-Barat: Religious festival

Pakistan Day: The day commemorates the anniversary of

Pakistan's Resolution, passed on March 23, 1940. The military parade is held in Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta and Karachi. Its main feature, however, remains the grand parade at Islamabad.

Independence Day: The National day of Pakistan is celebrated every year on the 14th of August. The day is an outright party, especially in cities! People celebrate at home, attend parades, join other parades with their own vehicles, of course, wear lots of green!

Birthday of Quaid-e-Azam and Christmas: Celebrated on the same date of the year the Christmas and the birthday of the founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam are two celebrated events in Pakistan, observed by the Christians and the whole nation.

Allama Iqbal Day: 9th November is celebrated as the birthday of the National Poet of Pakistan Dr. M. Allama Iqbal, with a lot of debating and poetry contests across Pakistan.

Mela Chiraghan: Mela Chiraghan is considered to be the one of largest Punjabi festivals in Pakistan. Also called "Festival of Lights," is a 3-day festival commemorating



the death of Shah Hussain, a Sufi saint, and poet, belongs to Lahore during the 16th century, It is a zealous event filled with dhamal (Sufi meditative dance), live music, and oil lamps for days.

Sibi Festival: The Sibi Mela (Festival) is a Pakistani cultural festival that's been occurring in Sibi, Baluchistan for several centuries. Today, the festival is known for its animal markets, camel racing, folk dancing, and local handicrafts. The 5-day event is a prime opportunity to experience the rich culture of Baluchistan.

The Kalash Festivals: The Kalash is a small and very unique ethnic group that resides in the Chitral district of KPK. The Kalash have three festivals each year (Chilam Joshi, Uchal and Choimus) that are open to the public, all of which are interesting events to experience in Pakistan. If you're looking to attend the festivals, be sure to reserve a place to stay well in advance.



Shandur Polo Festival: Looking to attend one of the epic and famous festivals of Pakistan? Well look no further than the Shandur Polo Fest- which happens to be held at the highest polo ground in the world. The fest takes place on the Shandur Pass, a beautiful high-mountain pass that connects Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with Gilgit-Baltistan.



Lok Mela: This is a wonderful folk festival held at Islamabad, where folk Music, songs, music contests, folk dances, craftsmen at work, exhibitions and sale of handicrafts mesmerize the people. The festival presents a unique opportunity to watch the culture and craft of the whole country at one place.



National Horse & Cattle Show Lahore: This cultural show is held at the Fortress Stadium in Lahore. Cattle races, cattle dances, tentpegging, tattoo show, folk music, folk dances, bands, cultural floats and folk games are truly fascinating during the festival, held in first held in last week of February every year.

Cholistan Desert Rally: It started back in 2005 and has since grown in leaps and bounds. A lot of tourists and travelers from the world come and see the desert rally. The rally start in mid of February each year in the majestic desert of Cholistan. More than 100 racers participate in the rally and challenge the sand of the Cholistan in different categories.



Sindh Horse & Cattle Show: This attractive festival is held in Jacobabad in Sindh province and activities of the event are similar to the Sibi Festival held in last week of February every year.



FLORA & FAUNA

Pakistan has a diverse relief and a great variety of landscapes stretching from mangroves in the south to Alpine tundra in the north. The country is endowed with a wide variety of ecosystems and habitats and many species of flora. Pakistan is the meeting point of the three out of the six biological regions of the world. Species belonging to the Palaearctic realm occur largely in the uplands; those belonging to the Indo-Malayan realm occur primarily in the Indus plain and the Himalayan foothills.

Pakistan's wide range of animal life includes the Siberian ibex, wild sheep, buffalo, bear, wolf, jackal, fox, wildcat, musk cat, hyena, porcupine, gazelle, peacock, python, and boar.









HOW TO GET THERE?

WELCOME TO PAKISTAN: THE PARADISE OF ART & CULTURE

Entry and Visa Formalities: Visitors to Pakistan must obtain a visa from one of the Pakistani diplomatic missions. Pakistani missions abroad offer various categories of visas, with some travelers eligible for visa on arrival if traveling as part of a group tour, or for business.

Pakistan also offers electronic visa applications and electronic travel authorization for the issuance of visas on arrival. Visitors can apply for a Tourist Visa on Arrival: submit the intent to travel at least 48-72 hours before the planned trip to Pakistan to receive an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA). Tourist Visa on Arrival is valid for 30 Davs. In case of extension of visa. tourists may apply directly to the Ministry of Interior which in turn authorizes the concerned RPOs for grant of extension of visa, if all the formalities are met. The updated fee structure for visas is available on the website http:// www.dgip. gov.pk/.

Islamabad International **Airport** is the main international airport serving the Islamabad-Rawalpindi metropolitan area and suburbs. It is built 20 km west of the twin cities near the Srinagar Highway and Motorway Interchange.

Jinnah International Airport is located in Karachi, the largest city and commercial capital of Pakistan and capital of the province of Sindh, it is named after Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan.

Allama Iqbal International Airport, originally known as Lahore International Airport, is located about 15 km from the centre of the city.

Other international airports of Pakistan are:

- Faisalabad International Airport
- Multan International Airport
- Peshawar Bacha Khan
 International Airport
- Quetta International Airport
- Sialkot International Airport



Climate: Pakistan lies in the temperate zone. The climate is generally arid, characterized by hot summers and cool or cold winters, and wide variations between extremes of temperature at given locations. The coastal area along the Arabian Sea is usually warm, whereas the frozen snow-covered ridges of the Karakoram Range and of other mountains of the far north are extremely cold.

Pakistan has four "seasons" a cool, dry winter from December through February; a hot, dry spring from March through May; the summer rainy season, or Southwest monsoon period, from June through September; and the retreating monsoon period of October and November.

What to wear? Finding a balance between being comfortable in the clothing you're wearing for travel and being conscious of local customs and traditions is important. Pakistan is a country of diversity in terms of terrain and temperature, with a great variation between the cities and the more rural areas, as well as the mountains and the plains. The national dress of Pakistan is "Shalwar-Kameez".

For men loose cotton shirts or t-shirts and long linen pants, jeans works well. For men, loose cotton shirts or t-shirts along with long linen pants or jeans works well. Whereas, for women, clothes should cover both shoulders and knees. When visiting the holy shrines, it is recommended for women to must cover their heads with scarfs and wear shalwarkameez.

Accommodation: Hotels and resorts in Pakistan offer a wide range of accommodation. Modern well-equipped hotels can be found in most major towns and offer excellent facilities such as swimming pools and sports facilities. There are also cottages, bungalows and rest houses in all principal hill stations and health resorts. The Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) manages two hotels, as well as 38 well-furnished and moderately priced motels throughout the country.

Getting Around: Getting around in Pakistan is incredibly cheap. The State owned Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has scheduled flights to many domestic terminals and daily connections are available between the major centers. Buses: In Pakistan, buses go anvwhere. anvtime but the treacherous mountain roads make the going very tough. Vans. Wagons, pickups and jeeps are also popular forms of road transport. City transport is dominated by Metro bus servis. Careem and Uber, private taxis, auto-rickshaws and two-wheeled. horse-drawn tongas. Rent a car with drivers can be hired at a reasonable rate from rent-a-car companies and tourist information centers.

Health Requirements: When travelling to Pakistan, one must be aware of the health requirements. A valid certificate for yellow fever is required if arriving from infected areas. Recommended vaccinations are diphtheria, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, polio, tetanus and typhoid.

Precaution against malaria is also recommended. According to the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA), until the end of 2020. travellers to Pakistan from the countries of high risk (category B countries) must provide the proof of negative COVID-19 RT-PCR test conducted not more than 96 hours from the commencement of original travel, failing which the operator / airline shall not issue the boarding pass. In future, the vaccination of COVID-19 would be a prerequisite for international travellers entering Pakistan and any country in South Asia.

The most up-to-date information in this regard and the lists of countries under category A (low risk countries) and category B (high risk countries) can be obtained from the PCAA website.

Currency: The Pakistani Rupee is the official currency in Pakistan. The currency code is PKR. The coins and notes are issued and controlled by State Bank of Pakistan. Business Hours Government Offices: Monday- Friday: 0900-1700 hours.

Private Businesses: Monday-Friday: 09:00-18:00 Hours.

Ramadan Timings: Monday-Thursday 10:00-16:00 and Friday: 10:00-13:00 hours

Shopping Hours: 10:00 -22:00 Hours

Public Holidays (Fixed):

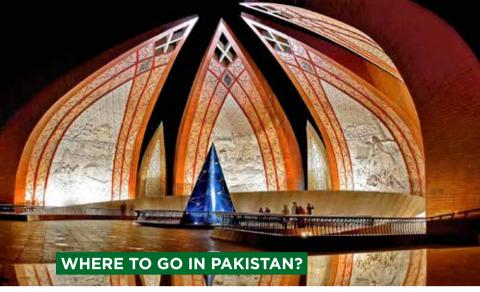
 Pakistan Day 	March 23
 Labor Day 	May 1

- Independence Day August 14
- •Quaid-e-Azam Day/
- Christmas December 25

Subject to Change: Holidays for Muslim Festivals are subject to the appearance of moon in accordance with the Islamic Calendar: Eid ul Fitr, (1st Shawal 1441 A.H) Eid-ul-Azha (10th Zil Haj 1441 A.H) Ashura (9th & 10th Moharrum 1439 A.H) Eid Milad-Un-Nabi (12th Rabi-ul-Awal).

Medical Facilities: 24/7 pharmacies are available in the major cities. Medical centers in Pakistan's larger cities are reliable and well equipped.



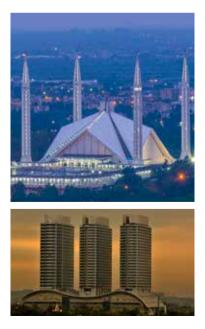


EXPLORE THE CULTURAL MAJESTY & NATURAL ENCHANTMENTS IN PAKISTAN

ISLAMABAD: The capital city of Pakistan situated in the hearts of mountains one of the most captivating capitals in the world, famous for its beauty, decor, fascination, attractiveness. It is a highly developed modern city in the country. Islamabad is noted for its high standards of living, safety, and abundant greenery.

The city is famous for the presence of several parks and forests such as the Margalla Hills. National Park and Shakarparian Park. It is home to several architectural and sacred masterpieces like Faisal Mosque. the largest mosque in South Asia. and the fourth largest in the world. Other landmarks in the city are Pakistan's National Monument. Centaurs Mall. Damin-e-koh. Pir (Monal) a restaurant Sohawa situated on the top of Margala hills, where one can enjoy stunning views of the city while having a

fulfilling meal. Islamabad's first City Tour Bus service has been launched by Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) to invite local and foreign tourists to enjoy the beauty of twin cities Islamabad and Rawalpindi.



LAHORE is popular for its array of tourist activities. From seeing priceless artifacts to historical sites to shopping places to a variety of restaurants, the options are endless. Sightseeing Lahore bus for local and foreign tourists is also available to enjoy the beauty and the historical & cultural places of Lahore.

• The Minar e Pakistan: A monument well-known for being a perfect representation of the ideology of Pakistan located in the largest urban park of the country.

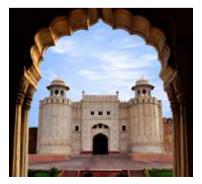


• Badshahi Mosque: Epitomizing the beauty, passion and grandeur of the Mughal era, it is Lahore's most famous landmark and a major tourist attraction. The view at night of Badshahi Mosque, Lahore Fort and Minar-e-Pakistan from roof tops of nearby restaurants enhanced the beauty and elegance Mughal architecture which attracts the tourist from all around the country and world. • The MM Alam Road: The small food street is known for village restaurants to International fastfood chains, to impress any foodie.

• Anarkali Bazaar and Liberty Market: Cultural capital of Pakistan, known for best shopping markets such as Packages Mall, Liberty Market and Anarkali Baazar stand out, thus making them a must-visit.

• Lahore Wagah Border: A trip to Lahore would not be complete without an evening at the Wagah border. Every evening tourists come to this place to witness the Wagah border ceremony, which is a military practice performed by both Pakistan and India at the same time since 1959. The cheering crowd and the elaborate drill on both sides is something that every visitor should experience before leaving the city of Lahore.

• Lahore Fort: Also known as the Shahi Qila, is a wonderful and one-of-a-kind Mughal structure. Fort enshrines different gardens, palaces, halls, Sikh museum and mosques captivate tourists visiting Mughal architecture.



• Masjid Wazir Khan: One of the famous historical mosque in Lahore. For photographers, this place is a dream come true, as they can enjoy a kaleidoscopic dream by witnessing the glazed colorful tile mosaics. The floral motifs and blue and green calligraphy come together in a mesmerizing exhibition of beauty across the facade.



Katas Raj: Dedicated to Lord Shiva, Katas Raj temples are situated in Punjab near Kalkahar on Motwar (M2), only 155 km from Islamabad. The historic story of the place is that Shiva lived here for so many years with his beloved wife.

KARACHI: The city of lights that never sleeps and it has always been a great attraction to the tourists for the variety of activities and tourist spots that it has to offer. Karachi is as renowned for its beaches and dining as it is for its architecture and atmosphere.



• Seaview or Clifton beach: If you are visiting Karachi for the first time it is the best place to start with. Seaview or Clifton beach is the main attraction of Karachi city. Tourists and families visit the beach 24/7. Camel and horse riding, dirtbikes, surfing and parks are the reasons that Seaview is always crowded.

• The Mohatta palace: A great place to visit if you are interested in history. This palace is close to the sea and there is a secret underground tunnel for safety that leads to a Hindu temple that is just a kilometer away. Now this palace is a museum that exhibits treasures and other collections.

• Mazar e Quaid: Also known as National Mausoleum. It is the resting place of the Founder of Pakistan Mohammad Ali Jinnah. This tomb is among the most popular destinations for foreigners as well as locals.

• **Charna Island:** A small island around 6 to 7 kilometers away from Karachi in the Arabian Sea. The main attractions of this island are scuba diving, cliff diving, jet skiing and snorkeling. So if you want to boost up your adrenaline, you must visit this island.

• Kolachi: The spirit of Karachi is Kolachi Restaurant which is situated at a heartwarming view of Do Darya, the only food street of its own kind. People enjoy their meal with the cold breeze of sea view and many who have an interest in fishing also use to go there for fulfilling their fishing hobby.

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Khewra Salt Mines: Khewra Salt Mines is the world's 2nd largest oldest salt Mine, and Pakistan's largest Mine. The Mine is famous for the production of the Pink Himalayan Salt and is a major tourist attraction for locals and international tourists. Khewra apart from the mine's production and heritage, it is a fantastic place to visit. The Salt Mines are located about 160 Km south of Islamabad, near Kalkahar.

• **Port Grand:** The Port Grand is the entertainment hub of Karachi. Due to its vast variety of food and the cinemas, it is so tempting and irresistible. It has a one kilometer bridge that is transformed into a food street and other stalls. If you want to try some real Pakistani food, you must visit this place. **PESHAWAR:** The sixth largest city in Pakistan and is the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Peshawar is also the largest Pashtun-majority city in Pakistan and is bilingual in Pashto and Hindko. Peshawar has been a remarkable tourist attraction owing to its historical legacy, cultural majesty, education and unique natural beauty. Top places for traveller's to visit in Peshawar are Wazir Bagh, Khalid Bin Waleed Bagh, Mahabat Khan Mosque, Bala Hisar Fort, Jamrud Fort Qissa Khwani Bazar, Peshawar Museum, The Cunningham clock tower, Chowk Yadgaar and Sethi Houses.

TAXILA: It is a city that is very well known for having strong ties and being the center of Buddhism in the country. Today Taxila is considered one of the important most archaeological sites in South Asia which includes a Mesolithic cave and the Archaeological remains of four early settlement sites. Buddhist monasteries, and a Muslim mosque. Alexander the Great's triumphant also entered the Taxila City in 326 BC. University of Taxila or Takshashila was one of

the oldest known universities in the world and it was the chief learning center in ancient Sub Continent. Taxila Museum is famous for its ancient historical civilization. Many remains of Buddha depicting the various stages of his life have been excavated and are currently present both at the museum. Taxila is 30 Km northwest of Pakistan's capital Islamabad. Today the city attracts thousands of tourists each year due to its fascinating archaeological relics, history, art and architecture.

ZIARAT: It is a holiday resort, about 130 km from the capital city of Baluchistan province Quetta. The famous Quaid-e-Azam (Founder of Pakistan) residency is also there in the valley where Quaid spent a few of his most memorable days. Tourists from all over the country visit the valley in the harsh summers. Its overall cold weather, fascinating sceneries, lush green forests and mighty mountains attracts tourists of all kinds. The hill station is easily accessible from Quetta through a highway.

KARTARPURA CORRIDOR: It is a border corridor between Pakistan and India, which facilitates visa-free crossing, connecting the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan to the border with India. The

> corridor is specifically established to facilitate the Sikh Pilgrims of India to visit their holy Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur village.

GREAT WALL OF PAKISTAN, RANIKOT FORT: The fort could be defined in three words; historic, mysterious and serene. Ranikot Fort is a historical fort near Sann, Jamshoro District, Sindh, Pakistan. Often referred to as a great wall of Sindh, Pakistan and is believed to be the world's largest fort. This fort is a wonderful historical site for history and heritage enthusiasts. It is a great opportunity for those who look to spend the day out on an open and adventurous

destination. Whether it's a high climb or an incredible stroll across a stunning landscape this tour is exactly what you need.





Northern Areas of Pakistan

Pakistan is the hub of the world's highest mountain chains and is famous for the most thrilled and amazing travelling sights in the world. World top five peaks are located in Pakistan. The most famous area for travelling in Pakistan is the mesmerizing northern areas of Pakistan, offering boundless destinations to visit and observe the colors of Nature. Many travelers from and outside the country visit amazing north Pakistan in a huge ratio every year to capture the beautiful sight of Pakistan. Here are some of the most beautiful places to visit in the northern areas of Pakistan.

Naran Kaghan Valley: On the top of the list for the best places in northern areas of Pakistan, we have Naran Kaghan Valley which is one of the most famous traveling places in northern areas of Pakistan amongst travellers. Every year, a huge number of visitors travel to this site with their friends. families and loved ones to capture the best memories. In the valley, there are a lot more to discover like the fairy tale Saif ul Malook Lake, Hike towards the Ansoo Lake. Lulusar lake. The Queen Dudipatsar Lake and lastly Babusar Top (4,173 m). It is a must place to visit if you're in Pakistan. The valley remains closed during winters from October till April due to heavy snowfall.

Chitral Valley: Pakistan's pearl of the north is one of Pakistan's most beautiful places to visit. From icy mountain peaks to rivers and forests, one can find all in Chitral. It is undoubtedly the most romantic, captivating, and enchanting place in the majestic Hindukush Range that attracts tourists from all over the world. You can easily find a quide if need. The famous place to visit in the Chitral district is the Kalash Valley has a unique culture which attracts evervone. The customs and language of Kalash

people are different from their neighbors.

Murree: Hill station in the northern region of Pakistan and is famous not only amongst the international tourists but also amongst the locals. It has a very cold climate and is extremely beautiful. Chairlift in Murree is a popular activity amongst the visitors there.

Nathia Gali: It is a hill station in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It is famous for its scenic beauty and hiking tracks. The area is forested with pine, oak walnut and maple trees. Adding to this, it is situated very near to Murree.

Bhurban: Located approximately 9 kilometers from Murree, Bhurban is another popular hill station amongst the tourists for its beauty and climate.

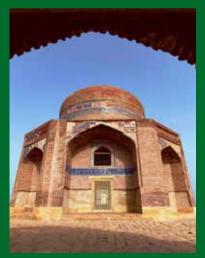
Gwadar: Gwadar is the port city located on the southwestern coast of Baluchistan and is setting up tourism trend because of beautiful beaches, sunset points, Islands, golden deserts, Hingol national park. Sangar housing scheme which is located at the top of a hill covered with seawater from 3 sides, resorts on the marine drive. Gunz is very famous for its location including sunset points, golden desert and greenish water. Gwadar is connected to Karachi and Baluchistan via Makran coastal highway.

Baba Chandrakup: You must have heard about a lot of

volcanoes, but not about the ones which spit mud instead of lava. Baba Chandragup is one of those mud volcanoes, which literally translates to "Father Moonwell" is located in Hingol National Park in Balochistan, Pakistan. Baba Chandragup, also known as Chandragup mud volcano, is considered an important site for Hindu pilgrimage as according to their beliefs people go there to confess their sins.

Historical Monuments at Makli:

Malki is one of the largest funerary sites in the world, spread over an area of 10 kilometers near the city of Thatta, in the Pakistani province of Sindh. Makli Necropolis features several large funerary monuments with exceptional architecture belonging to royals, various Sufi saints, and acclaimed scholars. The site was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1981 as an "outstanding testament" to Sindhi civilization between the 14th and 18th centuries



THINGS TO DO IN PAKISTAN



Pakistani Food - Best Dishes to Eat When You're in Pakistan!

Pakistani food is rich, packed full of spice, generous with ghee, and unbelievably tasty. In this list of the top dishes to eat in Pakistan, we're going to share with you the best dishes that one must try during the trip to Pakistan. These are Nihari, Kabuli Pulao, Chiken Karahi, Haleem, Halwa Puri/Channe, Mutton Korma, Saag, Pakistani barbeque (Tikka Kebab), Chapli Kebab and Biriyani.

Pakistan Lifestyles Dine-outs and Shopping Centers:

Pakistan offers most of the major cuisines in demand in the region. Continental, Chinese, American, English, Italian and Pakistani food are widely available. From highend restaurants to tiny food stalls, the country has something for everyone and won't let any visitors go hungry for lack of variety. Following are the best places for dine-outs, hangouts, and shopping in the major cities of Pakistan:



Islamabad: Centaurus Mall, Safa Gold Mall, Super Market, Jinnah Super, Kohsar Market, Damin-ekoh and Pir Sohawa

Lahore: Fortress Stadium, Liberty Market, Packages Mall, Emporium Mall, Mall of Lahore, M. M. Alam Road and Food Street Cooco's Den.

Karachi: Park Tower, Clifton, Schoen Circle, Zamzama Street, Dolmen Mall and Do Darya.

Peshawar: Sadar Bazaar, Deans Shopping Mall, Hayatabad Karkhano Market, Namak Mandi Charsi Tikka.

WHAT TO BUY?

Shopping in Pakistan is fun especially as each city has a different selection of souvenirs to buy! The traditional way to shop is to try the colorful openair bazaars where prices can be enthusiastically bartered! **Platter of Dried Fruits:** With gifts in mind, there are attractive sealed platters available with a selection of kishmish, chilgoza, peanuts, and hazelnuts.

Nan Khatai: These delicious crumbly biscuits are very popular in Lahore and are perfect for dunking in a cup of tea. They are widely available, but the best places to buy them are the Gourmet Bakery or the Khalifa Bakery in the old city.

Pair off Khussa: Khussa footwear is both pretty and distinctive and made in soft materials, decorated with elaborate designs. Khussas are Pakistan's favorite and most traditional shoe.

Peshawari Topi: Also known as Pakol or Chitrali cap, has been integral to traditional dress throughout the Peshawar city. The elegant and refined style is great in winters and looks good on both men and women.

Multan Pottery: The city of Multan is famous for many things, but what it's most famous for is its exquisite Islamic pottery tradition. Pieces of pottery can be easily found in the bazaars.

Himalayan Salt Lamp: They are made from a chunk of mountain salt which is mined in the foothills of the Himalayas. The salt has a lamp fitting inside and emits a lovely soft golden glow which creates a restful ambiance in a room.

Delicious Sohan Halwa: It is made from sugar, pure ghee and flour and is coated with pistachio nuts and almonds. The sweet is available everywhere especially in Multan.

Multani Embroidery: The city has a long tradition for making beautiful pieces of intricately stitched embroidery which takes many hours to complete. A beautiful gift for your family and friends.

Sindhi Ajrak: Ajrak is synonym of Sindhi Culture and its tradition. Ajrak is usally a shawl of 3 meter having block prints on it. Hyderabad is not the only spot of buying Ajrak but it is considered few of the spots where Ajraks are made.

Pashmina: The pashminas come in standard and large sizes and are available in plain jewel colors that can look smart worn over your winter coat to provide an extra layer of warmth.



ADVENTURE TOURISM

K2 Basecamp Trek: The K2 base camp trek in Pakistan is one of the great hikes on earth, a challenging and demanding but rewarding and delightful as well. The beauty of the place has no match in the world and the view of K2 is gorgeous.

Watersports at Khanpur: If you are a water sports enthusiast, Khanpur offers cliff diving, paragliding, snorkeling, jet ski, boating and parasailing.

Trek Mushkpuri to Top: Mukhshpuri is а 2.800-metre high (9,200 ft) mountain in the Nathiagali Hills. The trek begins from Pines Hotel in Nathigali spiraling upwards through the beautiful green pine forest displaying natural beauty. Trekkers on their way to Mushkpuri top are presented with colorful fairy fragmented carpet of flowers in the green Meadows of Mushkpuri.





Lahore Short Stay: There are thousands of tales emerging from every nook and corner of Lahore. This city is a perfect blender of color, mouthwatering food, culture, and Zindadilli.

There is something dreamlike about this city's liveliness no matter how hard you repel you become part of it, it is contagious.

Cultural Tour: Make your tour to the land of saints and royals. Multan and Bahawalpur are considered two shrines of Punjab (Pakistan) because of their miraculous cultural heritage as well as the splendid architecture. Walk through the prehistoric walkways, listen to stories of the age of chivalry witness outstanding architecture, take delight in the delicious food and treat your eyes and ears with lively folk music and dance.

Sun Downer Cruise: Take a tour of Karachi's beautiful coastline starting from Kemari to Manora, then passing by the famous beaches till the French beach.

Movie Night at Ormara Beach: Set up an overnight camp at Ormara beach, Karachi and enjoy the breathtaking sights of Kund Malir, Golden Beach, Princess of Hope, Natural Sphinx, and more.



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SOME DO'S AND DON'TS TO BE CONSIDERED

- Pakistan is an Islamic country; therefore alcohol is not permitted. However, some major hotels have special rooms where foreigners may buy and drink alcoholic beverages.
- During the holy month of Ramadan, eating, drinking and smoking in public are not permitted from sunrise to sunset.
- Mineral water is recommended for drinking.
- Both men and women should dress up modestly.
- When visiting a holy place, it is important to cover the head with a scarf and to wear clothes that cover arms and legs.
- Valuables and passports should be kept in safety deposit boxes provided by the hotel. It is advisable to be extra cautious when moving around in a marketplace or any other crowded area.
- For more details, check the country's government website for travel advice to Pakistan

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) Head Office: Ground Floor, Kohsar Block Pak Secretariat, Islamabad, Pakistan Tel: (051) 9208949, 051-9212850 | Email: info@tourism.gov.pk Website: http://www.tourism.gov.pk/

Directorate General of Immigration & Passports

Headquarters, Mauve Area, G-8/1, Islamabad, Pakistan Tel: 0092-51-111-344-777 | Email: mrponline@dgip.gov.pk Web:onlinemrp.dgip.gov.pk/ | http://www.dgip.gov.pk/Files Home.aspx

Pakistan Tours Limited

15, Flashman Hotel, The Mall, Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan Tel: 0092 51 9272017 - 8 / 0092 51 9272020 Email: paktourslimited@gmail.com Website: http://paktourslimited.com/

Important Hotlines

Ambulance - 115 | Police Emergency - 15 | Fire Brigade Center - 16 PIA Flight Enquiry - 114 | Railway Enquiry - 117 Telephone Complaints - 18 | Overseas Booking - 0102 Overseas Enquiry - 0104

GRACE AND LOVE, THE WONDER OF ASIA WELCOMES YOU ALL... 39



DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA



The Pearl of the Indian Ocean, the Teardrop of the Indian Subcontinent, or the Heart of the South Asian Sea, whatever you may call her, she is the Island Paradise, Sri Lanka. Being a unique elegance, filled with unending greenery, tropical rain forests, milky waterfalls, glimmering rivers, golden beaches, flora and fauna, cultural heritage, timeless monuments, ancient civilizations and smiling people, Sri Lanka has always been irresistible gracing the world as the Wonder of Asia.



JOURNEY THROUGH SRI LANKA

Official Name	Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
Government	Unitary Dual Executive Constitutional Republic
Capital	Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte
Area	65,610 km² 25,330 sq. mi
Population	21.67 Million
Religions	Buddhist (70.1%) Hindu (12.6%) Islam (9.7%) Christianity and Roman Catholic (7.6%) Other (0.1%)
Languages	Sinhala and Tamil (Official Languages)
Literacy Rate	92.6% (2018 Est)
Currency	Sri Lankan Rupee (LKR)
Time Zone	GMT+5:30 Hours
Electricity	Standard Voltage - 230 V Frequency - 50 Hz

GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW

Located in the southeast of the Indian subcontinent to the southwest of the Bay of Bengal and to the southeast of the Arabian Sea, Sri Lanka is the world's twenty-fifth largest island by area. In terms of the elevation, 3 zones can be identified, i.e. the central highlands, the plains, and the coastal belt. The heart of the country is the central highlands which includes Sri Lanka's highest mountains and most elegant mountain ranges and waterfalls. The Sri Pada (Adam's Peak) is an extremely graceful and sacred mountain which is worshiped and revered by all main religions in the world. Being an island, the coastal belt surrounds the country with endless beaches that shines the nation.

Sri Lanka has a tropical climate. In the lowlands, the average temperature varies between 26.5 °C to 28.5 °C while in highlands, at an altitude of 1800 m, is 15.9 °C. Sri Lanka's rainfall pattern is influenced by the southwest and northeast monsoons regional scale wind regimes which create 4 climate monsoon seasons throughout the year. Sri Lanka is famous as a year-round holiday destination whilst it is considered that the best time to visit Sri Lanka is between December and mid-April, the peak season of tourism.



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Along with a pre-history of about 125,000 years, Sri Lanka possesses a recorded history of over 2,500 years. The great chronicles of Mahavamsa, Chulavamsa, Dipavamsa, and Thupavamsa, written in centuries ago, are salient sources that have recorded the Sri Lankan history of over two millennia. In ancient Sri Lanka, Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa periods had been extremely notable due to many great reasons. It was during the time of King Devanampiya Tissa in Anuradhapura kingdom, Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka by the Maurya empire 2,000 years ago. The King, Dutugamunu the Great, in Anuradhapura kingdom unified the country vanguishing the Chola invasion. During the Polonnaruwa kingdom, the Sri Lankan agrarian culture had prospered and there had been a highly advanced irrigation system to nurture the cultivations. The King Parakramabahu in Polonnaruwa kingdom was known for his remarkable constructions in the irrigation sector such as the Parakrama Samudraya to provide water for agriculture. The first Sri Lankan king was Pandukabhaya (437-367 BC) whilst the last king of Sri Lanka was Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe (1,798 - 1,815 AD). There had been innumerable great kings in ancient Sri Lanka existed in the country for approximately 2,350 years, probably one of the longest monarchies in the world.

Due to the European invasions and their rule in Sri Lanka for about 430 years, significant changes in the political system, economy, culture, and education occurred. From 1,517 to 1,658 AD, the Portuguese invaders ruled the maritime Provinces of Sri Lanka whereas from 1,658 to 1,796 AD, the coastal areas of Sri Lank were under the Dutch rule. The British ruled the entire country from 1,815 AD until Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948.

MAJOR ATTRACTIONS OF SRI LANKA

Multifaceted Culture: Sri Lanka is well known for its rich cultural heritage which has been regionally diverse with an amalgamation of traditional and modern elements. Sri Lankan culture has been a remarkable portrayal of various social norms and behavioural patterns largely been influenced bv Theravada Buddhism and Sinhalese traditions. Hindu. Islamic and Christian elements have also been absorbed into the Sri Lankan culture. Based on the unique culture. Sri Lanka manifests typical aesthetic dimensions of dance, music, painting, sculpture, literature, architecture, and other aspects of performing and visual arts.

Architecture: Sri Lanka is home to unique architectural marvels which reflect a rich varietv of styles and aenres largelv influenced various cultural bv and traditional perspectives. The ancient architecture of Sri Lanka predominantly portrays Buddhist and Hindu architectural styles with intricate designs and carvings.

Furthermore, because of the European colonisation in Sri Lanka, especially the coastal areas manifest Portuguese, Dutch and British architectural genres.

In addition, Islamic architectural traditions can also be seen especially in the Eastern part of Sri Lanka.





Cultural Dances: Sri Lankan classical dance reflects three main traditions, i.e. the Kandyan dance of Hill Country (Udarata Natum), Low Country dance of Southern part (Pahatha Rata Natum), and Sabaragamuwa dance performed mainly in Ratnapura district. The three traditions of classical dance vary in their styles of movements



and motions, in the outfits worn by the performers, and in the nature of the drums and musical instruments used to provide rhythmic sound to the dance. Under the Kandyan tradition, there are various styles of dance known as Ves dance, Naiyandi dance, Uddekki dance, and Pantheru dance. In addition, folk and devil dances can also be seen in rural areas of Sri Lanka. Over time, these classical styles of dance have evolved in accordance with regional and local traditional perspectives.

Music: The music of Sri Lanka is used by people as an approach to communicate and express, and any festival is incomplete without lively music. Music has consistently been an integral part of the Sri Lankan culture not just to portray its customary features to a broader audience, but also as a mean of release from chaos. Sri Lankan music traditions have mainly been influenced by ancient folk rituals, Buddhist and Hindu traditions, the European colonisation, and the classical and commercial elements of Indian music. Sri Lankan classical music, folk music and modern commercial music are popular among locals and foreigners.

Traditional drums Sri Lanka resonates the sound of drumming. The traditional drums. which are known as Bera and an integral part of Sri Lanka's culture, are beautifully crafted producing rhythmic melodies while reflecting artistically attractive look. an The Kandyan Drum (Gáta Béra), Twin-drum (Thammátama), Low Country Drum (Yak Béra), Small Drum (Udákkiya), Hand Drum (Ath Rabana), Bench Drum (Awurudu Rabana). and Double-headed Drum (Daula) are predominant in Sri Lankan traditional music. There are rural communities specialised for making these traditional drums throughout the history of Sri Lanka, For instance, Kuragala and Hodiyadeniya communities in the Kandy district are famous for making traditional drums.



MAJOR TRADITIONAL FÊTES AND FESTIVALS

Being a home to 4 main religions of Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity, Sri Lanka is abundant with many artistic events and festivals based on these religions. Some of these beautiful events are as follows:

Vesak Poya is the most prominent festival held on the full moon day in the month of May in every year. On this very special day, Buddhists commemorate the significant events of Buddha's life, i.e. the Birth, the Enlightenment and Passing away (Maha Parinibbana).

Poson Poya takes place on the full noon day in the month of June in every year. Buddhists celebrate the arrival of Mahinda Thero, the son of the Indian emperor Ashoka, and introducing Buddhism to Sri Lanka.

Sinhala and Tamil New Year, which marks the beginning of the Lunar year, generally takes place on 13-14 April annually. Sinhala Buddhists, Tamil Hindus and almost all Sri Lankan people celebrate this



traditional New Year festival in the country.

Esala Perahera in Kandy is an extremely aesthetic religious celebration in Sri Lanka. In order to pay homage to the Sacred Tooth Relic of Buddha, housed at the Sri Dalada Maligawa in Kandy, this historical Kandy Esala Perahera is held in July in every year. The Sinhala term 'Perahera' means procession in English. Being a typical Sri Lankan event, this sacred and artistic procession includes tusker elephants adorned with lavish garments, traditional local dances such as fire-dances, whip-dances, Kandyan dances and various other traditional dances and music.



National Day (Independence Day) is celebrated annually in Sri Lanka on 4th of February in commemoration of the nation's independence from the British rule in 1948. The independence is celebrated in Sri Lanka through a flag-hoisting ceremony, traditional dances, military parades, and artistic performances.

Maha Shivaratri, meaning the Great Night of Shiva, is a Hindu festival celebrated in honour of Lord Shiva. In general, the festival is held in February or in March, i.e. in the Lunisolar month of the Hindu calendar.

Deepavali is the Hindu festival of lights, celebrated in October or in November, in the Lunisolar month Kartika of the Hindu calendar. Deepavali manifests the spiritual victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance.

Ramadan is observed by Muslims in Sri Lanka and worldwide in the nine month of the Islamic Calendar and honoured as the month of fasting, prayer, reflection and community. Eid ul-Fitar is celebrated after 29th or 30th of Ramadan which depends on the appearance of the new moon.

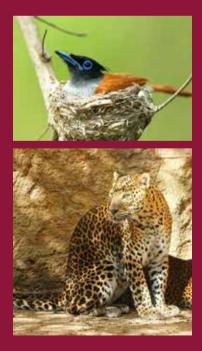
Christmas is annually held on 25th of December commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ. This is the month of joy and peace reflecting the end of a year and the beginning of a new year according to the Gregorian calendar.



FLORA AND FAUNA

Sri Lanka is a mesmerising utopia filled with unique flora and fauna. Well-preserved rainforests and exotic gardens reflect how mesmerising Sri Lanka is with her heavenly natural resources. The equatorial rain forests, the dry zone and the more temperate climate of the highlands are the homes of various plant lives. Tree ferns, bamboo, palm, satinwood, teak, ebony, and jak trees abound. Perfumed flowers in the island create a paradise on earth. From March to May numerous flowering trees such as the fiery Poinciana Regia, the white Mesua Ferrea, the cherry blossom-like Tabebuia, burst into bloom. The fragrant frangipani and lantana with its clusters of red and orange blossoms enchants the visitors.

The island is rich with about 435 species of colourful birds, hundreds of artistic butterflies, over 80 species of reptiles, and more than 90 species of glorious mammals. Beautiful bird sanctuaries create a strange happiness in the mind. Of the 435 species of birds, 251 are resident and around 21 are endemic to the island. Sri Lanka's wet zone is the home to most of the endemic birds such as the Ceylon Grackle, Ceylon Whistling Thrush, and Yellow-eared Bulbul. Birds like Red-faced Malkoha and the shy brown-capped Babbler can be found throughout the island. Sri Lanka's aquatic birds include numerous types of ducks, the storks, herons, egrets, and flocks of visiting flamingoes. Bird watching is a fascinating activity in sanctuaries like the Sinharaia Forest Reserve. Peak Wilderness Sanctuary. Kumana, Bundala, Kalametiva and Wirawila, Sri Lankan Mammals are glorious with majestic elephants and alorious leopards. The hilarious aspect of Sri Lankan mammals is the monkeys like Grey Langur, and the endemic purple faced Leaf Monkey. Many species of deer such as the Sambhur, the Hog Deer, and the Mouse deer can also be seen in the island. Other mammals include the Sloth Bear. the protected Dugong, the Wild Boar, and the Porcupine. National parks such as Gal Oya, Udawalawe, Handapangala, Wilpattu and Yala are ideal to watch these unique animals of Sri Lanka.





Sri Lanka's traditional handicraft industries have a history of about two millennia. Sri Lankan traditional handicrafts include pottery, woodcarving, handloom textiles, wooden masks, batik, lacquer work, brassware, silverware, metal work, coir-based products, reed and rush ware, and gem and Jewellery.

Pottery industry mainly produces kitchen utensils. In addition, intricately designed goods such as terracotta figures and carved vases and ornaments such as figurines and animals are produced at the pottery workshops in the countryside.



Handloom Textiles has been an age-old small-scale industry that generate employment to rural women. Traditional handloom industry produces household linen such as bedclothes and towels, upholstery materials, furnishing materials such as curtaining, cushion covers, saris and sarongs. The Sri Lankan handloom products are popular among tourists and locals.



Wooden Masks production is famous in the South western coastal belt of Sri Lanka. The wooden masks in vibrant colours represent various characters. These colourful wooden masks are a wonderful tourist attraction and used in Sri Lanka traditional dances.



Batik is a traditional fashion in Sri Lanka. Batik clothes are of distinctive designs in dynamic colours, which include unique styles of shirts, sarongs, dresses, shorts, wall hangings, cushion covers, bed hangers and a plethora of décor items. Brassware and Brass Casting industry produces extremely artistic items which contain traditional oil lamps, candlesticks and household utensils, ornamental and decorative ware, and statues such as elephants, Buddha and deity images. Brass statues and complex brass carvings are indeed great masterpieces of art.

Gem and Jewellerv industry manifests remarkable craftsmanship that hiahlv competitive in the international market attracting foreign revenue to Sri Lanka considered as the Treasure Island due to her possession of some rare gems in the world. Sapphire, ruby, cat's-eye chrysoberyl, spinel, garnet, beryl, tourmaline, topaz, and guartz are the wealth of island's gemstones that are most precious in the world. Sri Lanka's traditional gem cutters and polishing methods are considered some of the finest in the globe.



HOW TO GET THERE?

Welcome to the Island Paradise

Entry and Visa Process: Visitors to Sri Lanka must obtain relevant valid Sri Lankan visas. There are 4 types of visas which permit a person to enter and/or stay in Sri Lanka. Based on the purpose of visiting Sri Lanka, people can obtain Visit Visa (Tourist Visa, Business Visa) and Residence Visa.

A Tourist Visa is issued to bona-fide tourists who want to enter Sri Lanka for sightseeing, excursions, relaxation, visit relatives and friends, and medical treatments including Ayurvedic and Yoga for a short period of time. Visitors to Sri Lanka must obtain an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA). They can apply for the ETA online or can submit the ETA application through Sri Lanka Overseas Missions. In addition. the FTA application can be submitted to the head office of the Department of Immigration and Emigration of Sri Lanka if someone in Sri Lanka intends to invite a foreign national for a holiday visit or short business trip to Sri Lanka. The ETA is valid only for 30 days from the date of arrival. However, it can be extended for up to 6 months (180 days).

Online ETA application can be found at the ETA website (http:// www.eta.gov.lk/slvisa/).

Further information on Sri Lanka Visa process can be received from the Department of Immigration and Emigration in Sri Lanka.

Airport and Aviation Information

Sri Lanka has 5 international airports, i.e. Bandaranaike International Airport, Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport. Colombo International Airport Ratmalana. Batticaloa International Airport and Jaffna International Airport, Bandaranaike International Airport (BIA) in Katunavake is the main International Airport located 30 km north of Colombo, Lounges. Duty Free Shops, and 24-Hour Services of Left Luggage Facilities, Banks, Restaurants, Post Office and Parking are available at BIA. More information on all international airports and aviation services can be received from the Airport & Aviation Services (Sri Lanka) Ltd. The contact details are mentioned at the end.

Sri Lanka follows a Dual- Channel system (Red and Green Channels system) which enables a quick clearance of travellers at entry checkpoints. If visitors do not have any Dutiable Goods, Controlled Goods and Prohibited Goods, they may choose the Green Channel. Otherwise, they are expected to clear through the Red Channel. Further information on custom formalities in Sri Lanka can be received from Sri Lanka Customs. The contact details are mentioned at the end.



TRAVELLERS' ESSENTIALS

Climate: The climate of Sri Lanka tropical and encompasses distinct wet and dry seasons. Sri Lanka is never out of season for an enchanting holiday since there is always some part of the island which has friendly and warm sunny weather throughout the year. However, it should be noted that the best time to visit the Southwest region of Sri Lanka is from December to April because during this time the weather is warm in the area and from May to September the Southwest Monsoon rainy weather occurs in the region. To visit the northeast region in Sri Lanka, the best time of the year is from May to September as the region enjoys a sunny warm weather during the period and from December to April the northeast Monsoon rains take place in the area.



Accommodation: Sri Lanka offers all categories of accommodation facilities ranging from international standard star hotels to budget hotels, villas, bungalows, lodges and guest houses. In addition, there are homestays in the island, where tourists receive accommodation and hospitality from a local family in a traditional local home. However, it is recommended to use accommodation facilities travel services only from and government registered hotels. homestays, travel and lodaes. trekking agencies. licensed tour guides, authorised trekking guides and porters.



What to wear? Suitable clothes to wear are light cotton dresses, light weight suits, sunglasses, convenient caps or hats, and comfortable shoes or sandals in sunny warm areas in the island. Wide-brimmed beach hats are recommended to wear in the long sunny coastal belt. In the relatively cold highland areas. country pullovers or comfortable jackets can be worn. Since, there may be sudden rainfalls, it is recommended to have lightweight rainwear.



GETTING AROUND

Domestic Flights: There are several domestic flight services in Sri Lanka. Cinnamon Air is a domestic airline offering daily schedule flights from Colombo International Airport to the island's most picturesque locations. Simplifly is another leading internal airline in Sri Lanka that operates helicopters, planes and sea planes. Helitours is the commercial flying arm of Sri Lanka Air Force which was inaugurated in 1972. This mode of transport gives you a bird's eye view of beautiful Sri Lanka, while significantly cutting down your surface travel time.

Trains: The most spectacular way to travel across Sri Lanka is the public trains. The teardrop island in the Indian ocean runs the world's most thrilling rail journeys across greenery mountains, thickets of tropical rainforests, emeraldgreen tea gardens, and through the steel bridges over long rivers. The Sri Lanka Railway Department regulates the public trains in Sri Lanka, and this is the most ideal way to travel long distances at cheaper rates.

Boats: There is passenger boat service on waterways in capital Colombo. The point-to-point route between the suburbs of Wellawatte and Battaramulla passes through Colombo's various canals. The passenger boat service of the Beira Lake from Union Place to Colombo Fort was launched in 2019. This is a good tourist attraction as well as a mean of reducing traffic congestion in Colombo.



Tuk Tuk Safari: To travel around busy towns, cities and villages, you have the Tuk Tuk Safari service where you get authorised safari three wheelers with drivers. Tuk Tuk Safari is ideal for couples to enjoy the cities.



Safari Jeeps: To observe the hidden wildlife in beautiful national parks, jeep safari is the ideal way. There are various recognised travel companies that provide tourists with off-road 4-wheel drive safari jeeps.



Travel insurance should also be taken into consideration. Especially, the visitors, who are into adventure tourism, proper travel insurance is vital having a protection for activities such as trekking the highest peaks, scuba diving, water-skiing and many other water-sports, or darting through narrow roads on speedy tuk-tuks.

Currency of Sri Lanka is Sri Lankan Rupee. The currency code is LKR whilst the currency symbol is Rs. The minor unit is Cent. The LKR is divided into 100 cents (1/100 = Cent). The Notes are available in LKR 10, 20, 50, 100, 500, 1000, 2000, and 5000. It is recommended to keep cash in Sri Lankan rupees as international credit cards are not usable in most of remote areas, especially out of Colombo.

Banks at the airport are open 24 hours daily. Foreign currency can be exchanged at the banks registered under the Central Bank of Sri Lanka.

Working Hours: The business and banking hours in Sri Lanka are from 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. on weekdays (Monday – Friday). Some private sector companies and institutes work on Saturdays as well. Shopping hours are basically from 10.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. on weekdays. Most of the shops (especially fashion and clothing stores) are open on weekends (Saturdays and Sundays) as well.



Public and Bank Holidays:

The following is the list of fixed holidays in Sri Lanka:

Event Independence Day Sinhala & Tamil New Year Day Labour Day Christmas Day Month and Date February 04 April 13-14 May 01 December 25

Dates of the following holidays are subject to change based on astrological perspectives such as the appearance of full moon in relevant months. However, the months of these holidays generally remain unchanged.

Event

Tamil Thai Pongal Day Mahasivarathri Day Good Friday Deepavali Festival Day Vesak Full Moon Poya Day Poson Full Moon Poya Day Other Full Moon Poya Days

Month

January March March / April November May June January, February, March, April, July, August, September, October, November, December

Subject to Change (Islamic Calendar)

Eid-ul-Fitr (Ramazan Festival Day) Eid-ul-Alha (Hadji Festival Day) Milad-un-Nabi (Holy Prophet's (PBUH) Birthday)



Health **Requirements:** The health requirements for visitors from some regions in the world should be considered. Yellow fever vaccination certificate should be produced to the immigration and emigration counter at the Airport by the tourists from the countries in vellow fever infected areas such as African Region and South American Region, Hepatitis, Malaria, Polio, Tetanus and Typhoid vaccination certificates are also recommended to have when visiting Sri Lanka from these areas in the world.

All tourists entering Sri Lanka must produce a COVID-19 Negative PCR Test Report (done within 72 hours by an accredited laboratory) at the time of boarding and port of arrival. Furthermore, all travellers should undergo a PCR test on arrival at the airport. Travellers may visit Sri Lanka Tourism official website (Web: https://www.srilanka.travel/) under Operational Guidelines with Health Protocols. before travel to Sri Lanka. The official website of Department of Immigration and Emigration can also be referred (Web: http://www.immigration. gov.lk/web/?lang=en)

Healthcare Facilities: In Sri

Lanka, the healthcare facilities are of high standards. Sri Lanka operates a universal healthcare system that offers free healthcare services to all citizens. In addition to the public hospitals and medical facilities, there are semigovernment and private hospitals, nursing homes and other medical institutions located in the country. Moreover, 24-hour public and private pharmacies are available in main cities and towns.

Communication Facilities such as internet, telephone with IDD, email and fax are available in hotels, communication centres, post offices, and cyber cafes located in cities and towns across the island. Furthermore, some hotels provide tourists with free Wi-Fi internet facilities. It is useful to have local SIM card ensuring easy and cheap communication within the country.

Travel Information Centres (**TIC**) has been established at the Bandaranaike International Airport in Katunayake, in Colombo and in Kandy by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA). The primary task of TICs is to assist tourists on all aspects of their stay in Sri Lanka. The contact details of the TICs are mentioned at the end.

WHERE TO GO IN SRI LANKA?

Experience the Charm of Island Enchantment

Sri Lanka has always been one of the world's best tourist attractions filled with unending greenery, tropical rain forests, milky waterfalls, glimmering rivers, golden beaches, flora and fauna, cultural heritage, ancient cities, and smiling people.

Colombo: Colombo is Sri Lanka's prime city. The official capital, Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte, is also within the urban area of Colombo, so it is often called the capital of Sri Lanka as well.

Colombo is probably the first place you will visit. It is arguably Sri Lanka's most popular tourist destination. While you are here, you should definitely hit the most popular Colombo beaches to enjoy the surf and sun. Mount Lavinia beach is one of the most-liked locations and beaches in Colombo; it is a favourite spot for people of all ages and a great place to hangout for families and friends.

The city has a rich colonial heritage as well, and also some very scenic and popular attractions. The coastal city is a beautiful place to spend a couple of days just relaxing, indulging in the local food, and leisure activities, shopping malls.

The city has a good collection of attractions to serve just this purpose, like the Galle Face Green, the Beira Lake, and the Viharamahadevi Park, which are popular places for picnics and also for you to spend some quality time with your loved ones.



Anuradhapura: Prominent for its well-preserved ruins of the ancient Sri Lankan civilization, is one of the most evocative sights in the world. Over two millennia ago. Anuradhapura was the centre of Theravada Buddhism, ancient knowledge, art and architecture. and irrigation technology. The city is presently a UNESCO World Heritage Site located at 206 km (127 miles) away from Colombo. Anuradhapura currently belongs to the North Central Province of Sri Lanka. The site is rich with archaeological and architectural wonders.



Polonnaruwa: It is the second most ancient of Sri Lanka's kingdoms which has been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.



It is located 216 km away from Colombo. Thousands of years ago, Polonnaruwa was the capital of Sri Lanka. The ancient kingdom of Polonnaruwa was fortified with three concentric walls, beautified with parks and gardens, and sanctified with shrines and sacred places.

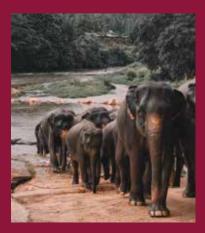
Sigiriya: An ancient city, garden complex and an primeval rock fortress located in the Central Province. The Sinhala term 'Sigiriya' means Lion Rock in English, which is a 200 metres high rock fortress in which there is a gateway in the form of an enormous lion on a plateau about halfway up the side of the rock and is presently a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is also famous as the 8th wonder of the world.



Dambulla: It is an ancient town located in the Central Province of Sri Lanka. The area is famous due to many attractions such as ancient large cave temple complex created in 5 natural rock caves, largest rose quartz mountain range in South Asia. The place offers something for every kind of traveller – whether you are planning a honeymoon or a family trip, looking for a relaxed resort stay or an active holiday, you will find exciting options in Dambulla. Tourism in Dambulla is also in a big way about shopping and food.



Kandy: Kandy is rated among the major cities of Sri Lanka and popular tourist destination. а Surrounded by dense forests and mountain ranges, acquiring a height of 500 meters from the sea level, the tourist places in this town gives you a feeling that you are living in a modern valley. Nature supports this place immensely and makes it the city with a pleasant climate. The town of Kandy adds value to its legacy and never changed its roots for the sake of development. This one virtue makes this town worth a visit.



Galle: Galle is a jewel. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, this historic city is a delight to explore on foot, an endlessly exotic old trading port blessed with imposing Dutchcolonial buildings, ancient mosques and churches, grand mansions museums. Wandering and its rambling lanes you'll pass stylish cafes. auirky boutiques and impeccably restored hotels owned by local and foreign artists, writers, photographers and designers.



Matara: A bewitching area located in the Southern Province. It is rich with art and architecture of Portuguese and Dutch traditions fused with Sri Lankan traditional art. Matara is fascinating location filled with natural beauty, white sandy beaches, lush paddy fields, verdant tea estates, and fragrant spice plantations.

Nuwara Eliya: A perfect place to relax in Sri Lanka. There are a lot of places to visit in Nuwara Eliya and the whole of Nuwara Eliya is completely different from the whole of Sri Lanka. It is a quiet

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place with great scenic beauty and for planning perfect family trips. It also has many farms, and travellers can enjoy the large open spaces. The visitors will find several temples in Nuwara Eliya that have become popular tourist attractions.



Trincomalee: One of the most important attractions of Eastern Sri Lanka, Trincomalee is a hidden gem. Full of blue skylines and deep blue ocean water, the place is perfect for a vacation. There are a number of restaurants in Trincomalee which serve delicious traditional meals.

Batticaloa: With a tropical atmosphere and beautiful coastal sea beaches set in the country's dry zone, Batticaloa is an emerging tourist destination in Sri Lanka. This city has some really good restaurants that can uplift your mood with delicious food and a vibrant ambiance.

Jaffna and the Islands: Jaffna is a wonderful city located on the

northern tip of Sri Lanka and is speedily turning into a charming tourist hotspot in Sri Lanka. This lively town in the north offers insight into Sri Lankan Tamil culture and reveals much of its colonial and civil war past. Other than the temples and beaches. travelers are always delighted by the variety of food and the options for dining. There are plenty of amazing restaurants, cafes, diners, and bakeries in Jaffna to appease vour palate and provide vou with the finest dining experience in all of Sri Lanka.



Ella: Ella has long been one of the most popular destinations in Sri Lanka, sought after for its laidback atmosphere and picturesque hiking trails. It's also the starting or end point of the famed Kandy-Ella train route, which is often referred to as the most scenic train ride in the world. Ella is a trekker's dreamland. Its waterfalls. rock cliffs. caves. plantations. villages, railway track and woods abound with birdlife, provide ample opportunities for hiking, trekking and cycling. Ella is also somewhat near to the prehistoric site of Balangoda known for the discovery of the fossil of Homo sapiens Balangodenis.

Adam's Peak: Located in a beautiful area of the southern Hill Country Highlands in the Ratnapura District and Nuwara Eliva district, this lofty peak has imagination for sparked the centuries and been a focus for pilgrimage for more than 1000 years. It is 2,243 m (7,359 ft) tall and known as Sri Pada (sacred footprint). Buddhists believe that it's the sacred footprint of Buddha, Hindus believe that it's the footprint of Lord Shiva whereas Muslims and Christians believe that it's the footprint of Adam, at the top of Mountain. This great mountain is a symbol of cultural unity where pilarims from Buddhist. Hindu. Islam and Christian cultures revere the same footprint at this sacred mountain.



Pinnawala Orphanage:

Elephant Pinnawala

Orphanage: The Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage is an exciting place to have an unforgettable experience with elephants situated in Pinnawala village, northeast of Kegalle town in Sabaragamuwa Province of Sri Lanka. It is an orphanage, nursery and captive breeding ground for wild Asian elephants. Currently it is a home to 93 elephants. The main attraction for visitors is clearly to watch the elephants bathing in the beautiful river. Feeding the baby elephants with milk and fruits is also a wonderful activity for tourists.



Ulpotha: If you are looking for an emotional, spiritual or physical reset, come stay at Ulpotha, one of the most extraordinary yoga destinations in the world. It is an admirably remote organic farm and eco village at the foot of the Galgiriyawa Mountains in central Sri Lanka that offers yoga holidays, Ayurveda retreats, digital detoxing and total relaxation. Ulpotha has no aspiration to be anything other than what it is – a lovely, playful but honouring folly.

Kandalama: It is a mesmerising village located in the Central Province of Sri Lanka. Kandalama is near the two UNESCO world heritage sites, i.e. the 1st Century BC Dambulla cave temple and the 5th Century AD Sigiriya rock fortress. The ancient irrigation tank built by King Vasabha, 1700 years ago, Kaludiya Pokuna Archeological Forest, and Kandalama Reservoir are great tourist attractions in Kandalama. The famous five star hotel of Heritance Kandalama is also situated in Kandalama. Arugam Bay: Arugam Bay is situated in Southeast coast of Sri Lanka. While traditionally fishing has dominated the local economy, tourism has grown rapidly in the area in recent years. Arugam Bay is the most popular surf spot and is also the only international surf competition venue in Sri Lanka. The local beaches. lagoons. historic temples and the nearby Kumana National Park are tourist attractions in the area. The local area is a home to elephants, often travelling between Lahugala and Kumana national parks.



PerandeniyaBotanicalGardens:ThePerandeniyaBotanicalGardenisthemostHeHeHe

elegant and largest garden spread across 147-acres (60-hectares) of land situated in the West of the city of Kandy in the Central Province of Sri Lanka. The garden includes more than 4000 species of plants, including orchids, spices, medicinal plants and palm trees. There are about 10,000 tropical timber trees. Dignitaries such as Queen Elizabeth II . Marshal Tito and Yuri Gugarin had planted trees to mark their visits to the garden. It attracts approximately two million visitors annually.

Temple of the Tooth Relic: The Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic is a Buddhist temple situated in Kandy in the Central Province of Sri Lanka. The temple is located in the royal palace complex of the former Kingdom of Kandy. The sacred tooth relic has played a pivotal role in Sri Lanka's political power since ancient times because it is believed that whoever holds the relic holds the governance of the country. Kandy was the last capital of Sri Lankan kings and is presently a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Ruwanwelisaya: This is a must visit place for all the Buddhists and tourists visiting Sri Lanka. Ruwanwelisava is an ancient stupa in the ancient city of Anuradhapura. Considered to be an icon of architectural glory in ancient Sri Lanka, Ruwanwelisaya is one of the world's tallest monuments, standing at 103 m (338 ft.) and with a circumference of 290 m (951 ft.). The stupa is one of the Solosmasthana (the 16 sacred sites of veneration) and the Atamasthana (the eight sacred sites in the ancient sacred city of Anuradhapura), which are places believed to have been visited by Buddha during his three visits to Sri Lanka thousands of years ago.



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THINGS TO DO IN SRI LANKA





Traditional Sri Lankan Cuisine: There is a famous saying among tourists that "Traveling to Sri Lanka is worth it for the food alone". Sri Lankan cuisine is indeed a great tourist attraction. The staple food of Sri Lanka is delicious rice and curry throughout the entire history of her people.

In general, Sri Lankan meals reflect a combination of herbs, spices, vegetables, fruits, rice, and seafood. Since Sri Lanka is a multicultural society, her cuisine portrays various traditional methods of cooking influenced mostly by Sinhalese, Indian, Indonesian, Islamic and Dutch traditions.

Kiribath (milk rice) is a traditional meal in Sri Lanka made with coconut milk. Kiribath is the main meal in traditional events such as New Year festivals and religious celebrations. It is also considered as a good meal for breakfast. Pittu, Roti, Hoppers, String hoppers, Kottu, etc. are good traditional meals for breakfast and dinner. These meals are served with fish and vegetable curries. Rice and Curry, Lamprais (A Dutch Burgherinfluenced dish of rice boiled in stock), Nasi goreng (a typical fried rice from Sri Lankan Malay population), and Biryani are ideal for lunch.

Sri Lanka was historically renowned for its spices, especially for cinnamon. Sri Lankan masala tea is also famous for its quality and taste.

Desserts: Sri Lanka's traditional sweets include Konda Kavum, Kokis, Mung Kavum, Aluwa, Pani Walalu, Arsmi, etc. made with Kithul Treacle or Coconut Treacle.

Fruits: Typical Sri Lankan fruits such as pineapples, bananas, mangoes, soursop, guava, avocado, wood apples, jackfruit, bael fruit, etc. are delicious and nutritious with essential vitamins and minerals.



SHOPPING: KEEP THE BEAUTY OF THIS ISLAND FOREVER WITH YOU

Shopping in Sri Lanka is a fascinating activity enabling travellers to keep the unique beauty of this paradise island forever with them. Sri Lanka is a typical home of traditional handicrafts, garments, gem and jewellery.

There are attractive shopping centres throughout the country run by both public and private sectors. One of the best shopping centres of Sri Lankan art and handicraft in Colombo is Laksala which is a state-owned gift and souvenir boutique with a large selection of traditional handicraft products.

The National Crafts Council, run by the government of Sri Lanka, is also an ideal place to buy traditional items, garments, cultural wooden masks, and other handicrafts produced in various traditional rural areas in Sri Lanka. For more details, please visit official website (http://craftscouncil.gov.lk/). Furthermore. privatelv owned Lakpahana Handcraft shopping centre located in Colombo is an attractive place for buying traditional souvenirs and other artistic items. More information can be obtained from (http://www. lakpahana.lk/).

Traditional textile art of Batik is prominent in Sri Lanka. There are many Batik shops located in Colombo and other parts of the country. Handloom textile is also a traditional cottage industry in Sri Lanka and handloom garments can be found in traditional shopping centres in north-western, south, central and eastern provinces of the country.

Moreover, Sri Lanka is a traditional hub of gems and precious stones. The world Trade Centre in Colombo and Gem and Jewellerv shopping complex in Peliyagoda are some of the best places to buy world's best jewelleries, gems, and precious stones such as blue sapphires, star sapphires, rubies, cat's eye, garnets, moonstones, aquamarines, topazes, etc. The Arcade Independence Square and the Dutch Hospital Shopping Precinct. which were ancient government buildings converted to sophisticated shopping complexes, are truly attractive shopping centres where you can buy various products, fashion, etc. Sri Lanka in general is a fascinating shopping paradise where you can buy anything and keep the memories of your beautiful journey forever with your life.



ADVENTURE AND ECO TOURISM IN THE ISLAND OF SERENDIPITY

Sri Lanka is blessed with rich biodiversity filled with sandy beaches and pale blue waters of Indian ocean, lagoons, wealth of fauna and flora, snaking rivers, swamps and interconnected canals, rugged terrains, high peaks, deep chasms, mountain gaps, and high waterfalls making the island ideal for eco and adventure tourism. There are a plethora of adventure and eco tour activities that can be experienced in this enchanting paradise.

Scuba Diving and Snorkelling are becomina popular among tourists interested in exploring underwater world and diverse marine life including colourful coral reefs around the seas of Sri Lanka. Hikkaduwa. Trincomalee, Kalpitiya, Bentota, Mirissa. South, and Talalla Mount Lavinia are a few beaches famous for Scuba Diving and Snorkelling.

Kite Surfina. Windsurfina. Surfing, Sailing, Sea Kayaking, Dolphin and Whale Watching. and Deep-sea Fishing are wonderful adventure activities famous in the north-western. southern and north-east coastal areas in Sri Lanka. Hikkaduwa. Trincomalee, Kalpitiva, Bentota, and Arugam Bay are a few of the spectacular beaches in these coastal belts for water sports. scenic beautv romantic and staycations.



Hiking. Trekking. Rock Climbing, Camping, Caving, Cycling and Mountain Biking are popular among adventure lovers, Knuckles Mountain Range, Bambarakanda. Ella. Kitulgala. Habarana Jungle, Horton Plains, Belihul Oya, Alagalla Mountain, Hanthana Mountain Range, Alagalla Mountain trail. Bahirawakanda hill, Corbetts Gap, Udawattakelle Forest Reserve, Ohiya, Adams' Peak and Traditional Villages are ideal places for Trekking, Hiking, Rock Climbing, Camping, Caving, Cycling and Mountain Biking.

Hot Air Ballooning is a wonderful experience for nature lovers. Visitors and tourist can enjoy hot air balloon rides over



the bewitching countryside of Sri Lanka. The experience is enchanting as gently drifting over breath-taking views of the tropical island paradise.

White Water Rafting, River Safari, Boat Rides, Canyoning, Safari. Catamaran Lagoon Safari, Elephant Back Safari, Horse Safari, Bird Watching, and National Park Safari are fascinating activities for nature explorers. River Kelani in Kitulgala, Sitawaka River off Avissawella. Madu River, Mahaweli River in Ulapane-Gampola, Kotmale River in Hatton-Nuwara Eliya, Habarana. Minneriva National Park, Kaudulla National Park, Yala National Park, Udawalawe National Park, Wasgamuwa National Park, Sinharaja Forest Reserve, Horton Plains National Park. Wilpattu National Park, Mannar Island, Knuckles Wilderness, and Rainforests of Galle are ideal for these adventure activities.

CULTURAL DO'S AND DON'TS TO BE CONSIDERED

 In general, Sri Lankans do not hug or kiss when meeting a person for the first time. The best forms of greeting are Saying "Ayubowan" in the traditional way or shaking hands when meeting people in Sri Lanka.

•Tourists need to dress properly covering shoulders and legs when visiting sacred places in Sri Lanka. Visitors ought to remove their shoes and slippers at Buddhist and Hindu temples, Mosques, shrines and certain sacred places.

 Visitors should avoid taking pictures with their back facing towards sacred statues such as Buddha statues. Some ancient temples and cultural sites forbid photography in certain indoor areas. •It is recommended to know the average prices of essential goods and services in Sri Lanka. So that, the visitors cannot be fooled by vendors who sell products at excessively higher prices.

 It is always wonderful to relish Sri Lankan traditional meals such as milk rice and curry, string hoppers with curry, hoppers with curry, ambul thiyal (fish curry), brinjal moju, curd and treacle for dessert, and Sri Lankan typical fruits such as pineapple, raw jackfruit, wood apple, passion fruit. durian. mango, papaya, soursop / graviola, banana, etc.



IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, No. 80, Galle road, Colombo 03, Sri Lanka | Telephone: 0094 11 2426800 / 0094 11 2426900 / 0094 11 2437055/59/60 | Fax: 0094 11 2444165 / 0094 11 2426984 Email: admin@sltda.gov.lk | Website: http://www.sltda.lk/index.html

Department of Immigration and Emigration, "Suhurupaya", Sri Subhuthipura Road, Battaramulla, Sri Lanka | Hotline: 1962 | Telephone: 0094 11 5329000 | Fax: 0094 11 2885358 | E-Mail: controller@ immigration.gov.lk | Website: http://www.immigration.gov.lk/

Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) System, Department of Immigration and Emigration Suhurupaya, Sri Subuthipura Road, Baththaramulla, Sri Lanka | Hotline: 0094 71 9967888 | Telephone: 0094 70 1777555 / 0094 11 5329422 | Fax: 0094 11 2674631 | Email: eta@ immigration.gov.lk | Website: http://eta.gov.lk/slvisa/

Sri Lanka Customs, No.40, Main Street, Colombo 11, Sri Lanka | Telephone: 0094 11 2143434 / 0094 11 2221602-3 / 0094 11 2221607 / 0094 11 2221611 / 0094 11 2221713 | Fax: 0094 11 2446364 | Email: dgc@ customs.gov.lk | Website: http://www.customs.gov.lk/

Sri Lanka Tourism Police, Senior Superintendent of Police, No. 80, Galle Road, Colombo 03, Sri Lanka | Telephone: 0094 11 2421052 | Fax: 0094 11 2382209 | Email: dptd@srilanka.travel

Important Hotlines: Tourist Assistance to Handle COVID 19 Situation: 1912 | Police: 119 | Ambulance: 1990 | Fire: 110 | Telephone Directory: 1212 Flight Inquiry: 0094 11 2263047 / 0094 11 2263048.



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- 2. Domain name services: with issues relating to their use becoming ever more closely aligned with those of trade mark registration, domain names are now an integral part of any intellectual property portfolio. At United Trademark & Patent Services, lawyers offer specialist expertise covering all aspects of domain name management. This includes general advice on the selection of domain names and filing strategies.
- 3. Trade mark services: the firm advises its clients in brand selection, brand name availability, clearance searches and provides wideranging services to secure protection and maintain their rights in trade marks, logos, slogans and packaging. Attorneys specialize in trade mark licensing and assignment, infringement and enforcement, litigation, anti-counterfeiting actions before courts and administrative enforcement authorities, including customs and police.

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