



RELIGION IS A WAY OF LIFE IN INDIA.
MOST FESTIVALS ARE BASED
AROUND RELIGION, MYTHOLOGY,
NATURE AND HARVEST.



Festivals are an integral part of the Indian culture and ethos inspired by the environment and religion, which is a way of life here. In an agrarian economy, harvesting season is celebrated with much gusto in each distinct region. If one tries to put together a list of all the festivals, each day of the month would have at least one festival celebrated in India!

FESTIVALS OF INDIA

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CALENDAR

JANUARY

CAMEL FESTIVAL
Bikaner, Rajasthan

INTERNATIONAL KITE FESTIVAL
Gujarat & Rajasthan

MODHERA DANCE FESTIVAL
Modhera, Gujarat

GANGASAGAR MELA
Sunderbans, West Bengal

PONGAL
Tamil Nadu

THEYYAM
North Kerala

THE REPUBLIC DAY PARADE
New Delhi

THE HAMPPI UTSAV
Hampi, Karnataka

THE JAIPUR LITERATURE FESTIVAL
Jaipur, Rajasthan

**THE MAHABALIPURAM DANCE
FESTIVAL**
Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu

ISLAND TOURISM FESTIVAL
Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar

**KOCHI MUZURIS BIENNALE ART
FAIR**
Kochi, Kerala

FEBRUARY

NAGAUR FAIR
Nagaur, Rajasthan

KILA RAIPUR SPORTS FESTIVAL
Ludhiana, Punjab

DESERT FESTIVAL
Jaisalmer, Rajasthan

THE KHAJURAHO DANCE FESTIVAL
Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh

WORLD SUFI SPIRIT FESTIVAL
Nagaur & Jodhpur, Rajasthan

THEYYAM
North Kerala

KALA GHODA ART FESTIVAL
Mumbai, Maharashtra

LOSAR
Pemayangtse Monastery, Sikkim

GOA CARNIVAL
Goa

**KOCHI MUZURIS BIENNALE ART
FAIR**
Kochi, Kerala

MARCH/APRIL

GANGAUR FAIR
Jaipur, Rajasthan

HOLI
All over north India

HOLA MOHALLA
Anandpur Sahib, Punjab

INTERNATIONAL YOGA FESTIVAL
Rishikesh

HOYSALA MAHOTSAVA
Belur/Halebidu Temples, Karnataka

FLAMENCO GYPSY FESTIVAL
Jodhpur, Rajasthan

**KOCHI MUZURIS BIENNALE ART
FAIR**
Kochi, Kerala

ATTUKAL PONGALA FESTIVAL
Trivandrum, Kerala

MAY - JULY

HEMIS FESTIVAL
Leh, Ladakh

RATH YATRA
Puri, Odisha

THRISSUR POORAM
Kerala

AUGUST - OCTOBER

NEHRU TROPHY BOAT RACE
Alleppey, Kerala

PULIKALI TIGER DANCE
Thrissur, Kerala

DURGA PUJA
Kolkata, West Bengal

DUSSHERA
All over India

NAVRATRI FAIR
Gujarat and all over India

RIFF FESTIVAL
Jodhpur, Rajasthan

GANESH CHATURTHI
All over west and central India

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

PUSHKAR FAIR
Pushkar, Rajasthan

CHANDRA BHAGA FAIR
Jhalawar, Rajasthan

CHRISTMAS
All over India

DIWALI
All over India

BATESHWAR FAIR
Bateshwar, Uttar Pradesh

MAJULI RAAS FESTIVAL
Assam

DEV DEEPAWALI
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

THE HORNBILL FESTIVAL
Kohima, Nagaland

THEYYAM
North Kerala

PULIKALI TIGER DANCE

Thrissur, Kerala

Potbellied men dance with tiger faces painted on their rotund bellies to rustic drumbeats in this pantomime-cum-parade dance at Thrissur which marks an end to Onam, Kerala's Harvest Festival. It is held on the fourth day of Onam every year. While the Pulikali Tiger Dance is said to be a nearly 200-year-old tradition, no one knows how it all began! While some locals say that Pulikali was brought to Kerala by Muslims who performed the dance during their mourning festival of Muharram, others say the local Maharaja wanted a new dance, something macho, as a part of the Onam celebrations with steps that mime hunting moves and tactics.

Highlights:

Get a ringside view of this spectacular event of colour, sound and movement right behind the hotel. Great photo opportunities as the Tigers roam the streets of Thrissur, dancing to rustic drumbeats.

If you are adventurous, the painters there are happy to paint a Tiger face on your belly and you can learn a few Pulikali moves from the performers.

Where: Thrissur, Kerala

When: Last week of August/first week of September

Travel Duration: The Pulikali Tiger Dance can be included easily in a 12 nights/13 days South India itinerary. Minimum two nights in Thrissur.

Size: Ideal for individual travellers.



RAJASTHAN INTERNATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL (RIFF)

Jodhpur, Rajasthan

In this annual festival, about 150 musicians from Rajasthan and all over the world gather for four nights at the magnificent Mehrangarh Fort. Once the sun sets, divine music cascades from the ramparts of Mehrangarh. The festival coincides with the brightest full moon of the year in northern India, the Sharad Purnima. Interactive sessions with the artists are held during the day for visitors and students within the walls of the fortress.

Highlights:

Three full days of the best fusion music from around the world.

VIP access to the Mehrangarh Fort at night (voted "Asia's Best Fortress" by Time Magazine).

Meeting and interaction with various artists.

After parties at exotic locations and dawn concerts at Jaswant Thada.

Where: Jodhpur, Rajasthan

When: October

Travel Duration: The Rajasthan Internal Folk Festival can be included easily in a 12 nights/13 days Rajasthan itinerary.

Size: Ideal for individual travellers and small groups of 6 - 8 people.



HOLA MOHALLA

Anandpur Sahib, Punjab

The Sikh festival of Hola Mohalla is celebrated in Anandpur Sahib, Punjab the day after Holi, the festival of colours. Hola Mohalla was started by the tenth Sikh Guru, Shri Guru Gobind Singh, in 1701 as a gathering of Sikhs for military exercises and mock battles. It is a time for Sikhs to reaffirm their commitment to the community and celebrate.

Highlights:

Mock battles, sword-fighting, archery, tent pegging displays by the Nihang Sikhs, the warrior saints.

Interaction with Nihang Sikhs.

Huge, free community kitchens, in fact the entire city turns to one community kitchen or *langar*.

Where: Anandpur Sahib, Punjab

When: March (a day after Holi)

Travel Duration: Hola Mohalla can be easily included in a 9 nights/10 days north India itinerary. Minimum two nights at Anandpur Sahib.

Size: Ideal for individual travellers and small groups of 10 - 12 people.



RAM VIVAH

Orchha, Madhya Pradesh

Every year, around November-December, the small town of Orchha comes alive with the unique festival of Ram Vivah which sees devotees from all around Bundelkhand come to attend the marriage of Ram and Sita, the main protagonists of the Indian epic Ramayana. The two day festival, which sees a lot of eating and merry-making, climaxes on the second evening when a huge *baarat* (procession), with the idol of Ram in a *paalki* (palanquin), is carried through the city. It goes from door to door accompanied by dancing horses, village bands and actors dressed as Ram and his younger brother Laxman.

Highlights:

A wonderful local festival which has not changed much in years.

See the spiritual and religious side of India up-close.

The lively market near the Ram Raja Temple, which is a buzz of activity during the festival, is a photographer's paradise.

Where: Orchha, Madhya Pradesh

When: November - December

Travel Duration: It's good to arrive in Orchha a day prior to the festival, as during the festival, vehicle movement inside the city is restricted.

Size: Ideal for individual travellers and small groups of 6 - 8 people.

