**India**

India is both enchanting and fascinating, with colourful, bustling cities entwined with a captivating ancient history and an enthralling blend of cultural attractions.

The country is known for its rich cultural heritage, diverse geography, historical landmarks, oldest monuments, biggest wildlife sanctuaries attract tourists from all over the world.

Attractions of Indian culture refer to the way of life of the people. It can be their language, religion, dance, music, architecture, food, and customs. Since India is a large country with a huge population, the culture differs from place to place. India is also home to many religions and has many festivals to celebrate.

**Food**

Indian cuisine dates back over 5000 years. Each region has its own traditions, religions and culture that influence its food.

Indian cuisine is meant to be eaten socially, in groups, until everyone is fully satisfied. You will be served all your courses at once on a plate of food called a thali. A thali is a large tray that is used to serve all the foods at once. Some foods are mild, sweet and some are spicy and hot.

The food ranges from very simple vegetarian to exotic dishes layered with texture and flavour. The common thread throughout the centuries remains the distinct mixing of spices that invariably give Indian cuisine its flavour and aroma.

**Attractions**

**Taj Mahal, Agra**

**Best for romantics and fans of Mughal history**

The Taj Mahal is an ivory-white marble mausoleum on the south bank of the Yamuna river in the Indian city of Agra. It was commissioned in 1632 by the Mughal emperor, Shah Jahan to house the tomb of his wife, Mumtaz Mahal.

**The Golden Temple, Amritsar**

**Best for experiencing the power of devotion**

India has pilgrimage destinations to spare, but few come close to the vibrant energy of the [Golden Temple](https://www.lonelyplanet.com/india/punjab-and-haryana/amritsar/attractions/golden-temple/a/poi-sig/1150764/356445) in Amritsar. The most sacred site for the Sikh religion is a gleaming jewel box, floating in a mirror-like sacred pool, thronged day and night by an unbelievable mass of pilgrims. You don’t have to be spiritually inclined to feel its powerful rhythms.

**Bandhavgarh National Park, Madhya Pradesh**

**Best for tiger encounters**

The national parks of [Madhya Pradesh](https://www.lonelyplanet.com/india/madhya-pradesh-and-chhattisgarh) are some of the best places on the planet to get close to royal Bengal tigers. Seeing one of these striped superstars loping out of the jungle will stay with you for a lifetime – as well as leaving you heartbroken at the thought of how few tigers still survive in the wild.

**The Kerala Backwaters**

**Best for lovers of slow travel**

After the dusty, densely populated northern plains, tropical South India offers a lusher, more laid-back travel experience. The scenic backwaters of Kerala comprise a serene stretch of lakes, canals and lagoons located parallel to the coast of the Arabian Sea. The backwater regions of Kerala are one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world.

**The Red Fort, New Delhi**

Built by Shah Jahan in 1648 as the seat of Mughal power – a role it maintained until 1857 – the magnificent crescent-shaped Red Fort in New Delhi, named after the stunning red sandstone, used in its construction, covers a vast area of more than two square kilometres, all of it surrounded by a large moat.

**The Golden City: Jaisalmer**

Named for the yellow sandstone used in most of its buildings, the Golden City of Jaisalmer is an oasis of splendid old architecture that rises from the sand dunes of the Thar Desert. Once a strategic outpost, today the city is filled with splendid old mansions; magnificent gateways; and the massive Jaisalmer Fort, also known as the Golden Fort, a daunting 12th-century structure that rises high above the town.

**The Beaches of Goa**

Long known within India as the "go-to" destination for those seeking a great beach holiday, Goa's beautiful western coastline, overlooking the Arabian Sea, has only recently been discovered by tourists from overseas. Goa's more than 60 miles of coastline is home to some of the world's loveliest beaches, each with their own particular appeal.

**Jaipur**

Jaipur became known as “The Pink City” when, in 1876, Maharaja Ram Singh had most of the buildings painted pink—the colour of hospitality—in preparation for a visit by Britain's Queen Victoria.