***1.Lake Pichola***

Framed by majestic mountains, grand forts and magical palaces, Lake Pichola is a site dreams are made of. Watching the limpid blue sheet being set ablaze by the rising sun, is magical. It's equally mesmeric to just watch the grey-green mountains cast long shadows on the water, as the sun sets, and twinkling stars float on the ripples, mingling with lights from the surrounding restaurants and hotels. Located right at the heart of Udaipur, Pichola is one of the oldest and largest of the city's lakes. Built in 1362 by Pichhu Bajanara during the rule of Maharana Lakha, legends say that the beauty of the lake enticed Maharana Udai Singh to build a city by its banks. It was enlarged by Maharana Udai Singh II, after the city was constructed, by flooding Picholi village, which gave the lake its name. He also built a stone masonry dam in the Badipol area by the lake.

Today, the lake is 4 km long and 3 km wide.

There are four islands on the lake: Jag Niwas, where the Lake Palace is located; Jag Mandir, with the palace of the same name; Mohan Mandir, from where the king would enjoy the annual Gangaur festival celebrations and Arsi Vilas, a tiny island which had a small palace and an ammunition storehouse. Legends say it was built by one of the kings of Udaipur to enjoy the sunset on the lake. It is also has a sanctuary where a large variety of birds like egrets, cormorants, coots, tufted ducks, terns and kingfishers can be spotted. Beautiful arched bridges were built to connect the shores of the lake at several places. While the magnificent City Palace stands along the eastern banks of this lake, on the southern side, stands the Machla Magri (Machhala Magra) or Fish Hill on which is located the ruins of the Eklinggarh Fort.

Boatrides on the lake are one of Udaipur's unmissable experiences. And while cruising on the serene lake, one truly understands the meaning of author Rudyard Kipling's words: "If the Venetian owned the Pichola Lake, he might say with justice, `see it and die'"!

2.***Mountain Ranges***

The Indian peninsula is home to many majestic and mighty mountain peaks and ranges. The most prominent among these are the Great Himalayas that boast almost all the high peaks in the world. The Mount Everest is the highest point, reaching an elevation of almost 8,848 m. [Leh-Ladakh](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/leh-ladakh.html) lying in the northern part of the Great Himalayas is a surreal tourist destination, where one can visit to admire natural retreats, soak in serenity and spirituality, and indulge in adventure sports like trekking, mountain biking, mountain climbing etc. Moreover, the meadows of [Tapovan](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/gangotri/tapovan.html) in Uttarakhand provide enchanting views of the peaks of the Garhwal Himalayas. To explore the Kumaon Himalayas, head to [Munsiyari](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/pithoragarh/munsiyari.html), a tiny hill town, which makes an excellent vantage point to sight the spectacular Panchachuli group of peaks.

The Karakoram range borders India on the north-west and is home to the maximum glaciers on the planet, save the polar regions. The Siachen and the Biafo glaciers are also located in this range and are believed to be among the largest glaciers in the world. Starting from Himachal Pradesh and running into the state of Jammu and Kashmir is the stunning Pir Panjal range, also called the Lower Himalayas. This range encompasses valleys and hill stations like [Gulmarg](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/gulmarg.html), which look like nothing less than paradise.

Along the eastern part of the country runs the Purvanchal Range, which covers most of the states of the Northeast. Even central India boasts verdant mountains and the popular Satpura and Vindhaya Range stand parallel to each other. Housing many beautiful hill stations, teeming national parks and spiritual sites, these ranges make for a great tourist getaway.

One of the oldest mountain ranges in the country and the world is the Aravalli Range, which is spread across areas of Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi and Gujarat. These mountains stand as a buffer for the monsoon winds that try to reach the Thar desert. The beautiful hill station of [Mount Abu](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/udaipur/mount-abu.html) is nestled amidst these ranges.

One of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the mountain range of Western Ghats is about 1600 m long and passes through Gujarat and [Kanyakumari.](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/kanyakumari.html) Known as the Sahyadri mountains, it comprises the ranges of Nilgiris (known for its tea plantations) and Anaimalai (one of the highest peaks in Kerala).

Comparatively lower in altitude than the Western Ghats, the Eastern Ghats run parallel to the Bay of Bengal, through the states of West Bengal, [Odisha](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/states/odisha.html), [andhra-pradesh](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/states/andhra-pradesh.html) and [Tamil Nadu](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/states/tamil-nadu.html). These mountains are home to many rivers that contribute to the fertility of the land, like the Godavari, Krishna, Mahanadi and Kaveri. These ghats also boast many prominent pilgrim spots.

***3.Karnala Bird Sanctuary***

A popular stopover for birdwatchers, the Karnala Bird Sanctuary lies at a distance of about 52 km from Mumbai. The biodiversity of the Western Ghats makes it a great habitat for birds and the sanctuary was especially favoured by renowned Indian ornithologist Dr Salim Ali. Its proximity to the Patalganga river and the richness of the woodland vegetation ensures that this park boasts an extremely diverse flora and fauna with over 150 species of resident and 37 species of migratory birds, which visit the sanctuary in winter each year. Around 23 water dishes made of cement are kept at strategic places to provide water to animals and birds. The Hariyal Nature Trail in the sanctuary offers great bird-sighting experiences, especially during the monsoon. For those seeking a more in-depth insight into the fascinating life of birds, the 6-km-long Mortaka Trail is an amazing spot with its fascinating array of bird and butterfly life. Apart from the many hiking trails and picnic spots, this sanctuary is also known for the Karnala Fort that rests on top of the hills. Located at an altitude of 445 m above sea level, this fort was built in the 12th century as a vantage point to govern the trade route between Bhor Ghat (a mountain passage in the Western Ghats) and Mumbai. At the bottom of the funnel hill of the fort there are 12 water storage tanks built with basalt rock to collect and retain rain water all around the year. The Karnala Bird Sanctuary is home to exotic bird species like the peregrine and shikra and also invites many trekkers who come here to escape the city and soak in the tranquility and isolation of this region.

***4.Biosphere Reserves In India***

Established by countries and recognised by UNESCO under its Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, biosphere reserves aim to promote sustainable development in a region. India boasts 18 such reserves that shelter diverse species and conserve all forms of life. Besides offering amazing opportunities for scientific studies and researches, these reserves provide exciting wildlife game drives in the many national parks and wildlife sanctuaries they house.

**3.Cold Desert, Himachal Pradesh**

One of the most fascinating biosphere reserves in India, Cold Desert is noted for the preservation of the snow leopard. It is stretched along the Western Himalayas, from Ladakh to Kinnaur, in Himachal Pradesh. Declared a biosphere reserve in 2009, it comprises the Pin Valley National Park and its surroundings, Kibber Wildlife Sanctuary, Sarchu and Chandratal, etc. Some of the common fauna you can spot here include Himalayan black bear, Himalayan blue sheep, Himalayan ibex, snow pigeon, Tibetan gazelle, woolly hare, red fox, etc.

**Sundarban, West Bengal**

Home to the unique royal Bengal tiger, the Sundarbans is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, inscribed in 1987. One of the largest mangrove forests in the world, the Sundarbans forests cover an area of 10,000 sq km and lie on the delta of Ganga, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers in the Bay of Bengal. The mist-shrouded area is rife with a variety of flora and fauna, including 260 species of birds and other threatened species like the estuarine crocodile and the Indian python. A cluster of low-lying islands in the Bay of Bengal spread across India and Bangladesh, make up the Sundarbans, which is among the largest active delta regions in the world. The Sundarbans got its name from a mangrove plant called 'sundari', which translated means a beautiful forest. The area is riddled with rivers and various creeks and tributaries criss-cross through it.

**1.Agasthyamala, Karnataka-Tamil Nadu-Kerala**

Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve is located in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Western Ghats, at an elevation of almost 1,868 m above sea level. It houses three wildlife sanctuaries within its expanse, namely-Shendurney, Peppara and Neyyar. The topography of the reserve constitutes moist forests, deciduous rainforests, grasslands and plains. Some of the common faunae you can find here include Nilgiri tahrs, sloth bears, Indian pangolins, pythons, monitor lizards, king cobras, Malabar giant squirrels, spotted deer, etc.

**2.Great Nicobar, Andaman and Nicobar Island**

Occupying almost 85 per cent area of Great Nicobar, the largest island in the Nicobar Islands, this reserve lies in the Bay of Bengal. It is sprawled over an area of 885 sq km and surrounded by a forest buffer zone that is 12 km wide. It was declared a biosphere reserve in 2013 and includes two national parks - Campbell Bay National Park and Galathea National Park. Some common faunae you can find here include Nicobar serpent eagle, crab-eating macaque, giant robber crab, Nicobar megapode, palm civet, water monitor lizards, etc.

5.***Tiger Reserves***

Tiger, the national animal of India, is among the most prized sightings in the country's jungles, which boast more than half of the world's population of the feline. To protect this majestic denizen of the forest, Project Tiger, a conservation project, was launched in 1972. Initially, nine tiger reserves were dedicated to the conservation of the animal, with Jim Corbett National Park and Tiger Reserve being the first among them. Today, the country is home to about 50 reserves that offer a unique opportunity to sight the majestic tiger in the wild.

**Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve,**

**Assam**

One of the greatest wildlife emblems of the country, the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Kaziranga, is famed as a home to two-thirds of the world's population of the rare one-horned rhinoceros and the royal Bengal tiger. With the mighty Brahmaputra river lapping at the fringes, the park encompasses wetlands, forests and grasslands, which shelter a sizeable population of the rock python, the reticulated python and the king cobra, the longest venomous snake. While eastern swamp deer and wild water buffalo are common sights, if you're lucky, you can also spot a herd of elephants making their way grandly through the park. The park is surrounded by ancient temples, pristine waterfalls and lush tea estates.

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A cluster of low-lying islands in the Bay of Bengal spread across India and Bangladesh, make up the Sundarbans, which is among the largest active delta regions in the world. The Sundarbans got its name from a mangrove plant called 'sundari', which translated means a beautiful forest. The area is riddled with rivers and various creeks and tributaries criss-cross through it. Sundarbans was declared a tiger reserve in 1974.

**Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra**

A haven for tiger lovers, Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve is one of the largest in Maharashtra. Comprising patches of dense forests, pretty meadows and deep valleys, it is one of the few tiger reserves in India where tourists can easily spot the tiger in its natural habitat. Lined with teak trees, the best way to explore the national park is by taking a safari in a gypsy. Other common sightings in the park include sloth bears, leopards, gaurs, nilgais, civets, striped hyenas, sambars, barking deers, chitals and wild dogs. Tadoba is divided into three forest ranges known as the Tadoba north range, Kolsa south range and Morhurli range. The forest is also home to a wide variety of reptiles including pythons and cobras.

**Dampa Tiger Reserve, Mizoram**

Covering an area of 500 sq km, Dampa Tiger Reserve is the largest wildlife sanctuary in the state of Mizoram. It is home to elephants, gaur, binturong, dhole, bear, tiger and many primates as well as hornbills, jungle fowls, pheasants and wood pigeons. One can also come across a fine habitation of amphibians and reptiles and 16 species of lizards. The best time to visit Dampa Tiger Reserve, located around 130 km from Aizawl, is between October and April. The reserve is located on the state's north-western border and shares an 80 km international border with the neighbouring nation of Bangladesh.

***6.National Parks***

**Bannerghatta National Park, Bengaluru**

Located on the outskirts of Bengaluru, Bannerghatta National Park is one of the few places around the world where wilderness is situated in close proximity to a metro city. The best way to explore the park is by taking a jungle safari in a bus. The safari takes you through different zones that shelter animals like tigers, elephants and sloth bears. Watching white tigers relaxing in their natural habitat makes for a truly thrilling experience. The Bannerghatta Biological Park is also known for housing the first-of-its-kind butterfly park in the country. While visitors can witness some beautiful butterfly species, the park also houses a museum that gives details about the life cycle of these beautiful creatures through pictures and video guides. A part of Bannerghatta National Park, it was started in 1972. In 2002, it was separated as an independent establishment.

**Hemis Wildlife Sanctuary, Leh-Ladakh**

Named after the Hemis Monastery, Hemis Wildlife Sanctuary is spread across an area of 600 sq km. Comprising the catchments of Markha, Rumbak and Sumdah nalas, it is located on the west bank of the River Indus. Spotted with rocks and boulders, the Hemis Sanctuary's terrain is characterised by rugged valleys that have vast tracts of grasslands and several dense patches of shrubs and trees. The sanctuary has been identified as a snow leopard reserve and is also known for beasts that are usually found at such altitudes like the rare shapu, bharal, wolf, Pallas' cat, ibex, Tibetan argali and the Ladakh urial. Since the bharal and urial are found in large numbers here, it is easy to sight them. Over 30 species of avifauna have been spotted here, of which the most common are the Himalayan snow cock and the Chukar partridge.

***7.Deserts***

From cold to hot to salt, the landscape of India has many deserts lying within its vast expanse. The Thar Desert also called the Great Indian Desert, is a region of endless sand hills and lies in the state of Rajasthan in the north-western part of the country. It is sprawled over an area of 200,000 sq km and hosts some of the most beautiful cities like [Jaisalmer](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/jaisalmer.html), which is also called the gold city owing to the golden sand dunes in it. Besides exploring havelis and temples, tourists can take a camel safari through the vast [desert](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/jaisalmer/desert-safari-at-sam-sand-dunes.html) here or camp under the star-lit sky. Located in the midst of the desert is another splendid city, that of [Bikaner](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/bikaner.html). Besides its captivating palaces and forts, the city also finds appeal as a major [camel-breeding centre](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/bikaner/camel-breeding-farm.html). Known as the gateway to Thar, [Jodhpur](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/jodhpur.html) is another gem hidden in the mysterious Thar Desert.

One of the most pristine places in the country is the [Rann of Kutch](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/bhuj/rann-of-kutch.html), which is a vast expanse of white salt desert. As far as the eye goes, one can see undulating stretches of white land. Lying in the Kutch district of Gujarat, it is one of the largest salt deserts in the world. During winters, this stark land comes to life when various camps are put up and cultural performances are organised, along with adventure-activities like hot-air ballooning.

A place where one can almost hear the scream of silence, the hauntingly beautiful dry and cold desert of [Ladakh](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/leh-ladakh/ladakh.html) is a gem on India's tourist map. It lies in the Great Himalayas and is bordered by the majestic Karakoram Range in the north and the mighty Zanskar mountains in the south. Though the place is freezing throughout the year, the thinness of the air makes one feel the sun's heat intensely. This area is visited by tourists seeking spirituality in the various gompas here, or by adventure-enthusiasts looking to indulge in the sport of trekking. The stunning meadows and glaciers also cast a charm on the quintessential traveller.

***8. Beaches***

From the undulating golden beaches that make for an ideal vantage point to watch the sun dipping into the sea, to the sandy expanses that see the hatching of a thousand Olive Ridley Turtles, beaches stroke both the eastern and western coasts of the Indian peninsula. The tail of India, [Kanyakumari](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/kanyakumari.html), boasts some of the calmest and cleanest beaches in the country, like the [Sanguthurai Beach](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/kanyakumari/listicle/things-to-do/sanguthurai-beach.html). One can also witness the breathtaking sight of the Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea merging into one another at the [Kanyakumari Beach](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/kanyakumari/kanyakumari-beach.html) that is located in the heart of the city.

The beaches of the country also act as sentinels of the rich cultural heritage of India and host many temples, memorials and monuments. The [Eliott Beach](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/chennai/things-to-do/elliots-beach.html) in Chennai is a fine example that boasts many memorials, while [Fort Kochi Beach](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/kochi/fort-kochi-beach.html) in Kochi houses spiritually significant sites.

While talking of beaches, it would be hard to ignore [Goa](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/goa/nature.html), the hub of sand and sea in the country. With glorious sandy expanses to its name, the place invites tourists for its relaxed vibes. From pristine white sands fringed by swaying palms of [Colva Beach](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/goa/colva-beach.html) to the crescent-shaped [Vagator Beach](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/goa/vagator-beach.html) that plays host to the numerous parties that light up Goa every night, Goa has much to offer a traveller. Most beaches here have the facility of water sports, and one can satiate the adventurer in them by trying water skiing, scuba diving, parasailing and windsurfing. Some of the popular beaches to avail these opportunities are the Calangute Beach, Sinquerim Beach, Baga Beach, Anjuna Beach etc. Another splendid feature of beaches here is the shacks lining them, which invite visitors to breathe in the spectacular views and revel in the laid-back zeal of Goa.

India's coastal line lures many migratory birds and aquatic life to come and nestle on the sun-kissed shores. Amongst these, the most popular is the [Velas Beach](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/ratnagiri/velas-beach.html) in Maharashtra, known for the Olive Ridley Turtles that have been coming here for a few years to lay eggs during the breeding season. Each year, the tiny village of Velas sees thousands of newly-hatched turtles take their first steps towards the blue sea. The villagers celebrate the Turtle Festival annually after ensuring the safety of these eggs. The Gahirmatha Beach in Odisha is also an important nesting site for Olive Ridley Turtles. This beach is a part of the larger Gahirmatha Marine Wildlife Sanctuary. The Chandrabhaga Beach in Puri is another popular site to spot the baby Olive Ridley Turtles. Meanwhile, a popular haunt for migratory birds is the [Pingleshwar Beach](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/bhuj/pingleshwar-beach.html) in Bhuj.

While the western coast of India sees much tourist hopping, the eastern coast is lesser known, however, it is no less beautiful. [Puri](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/puri.html), in Odisha, boasts some of the most awe-inspiring beaches in the country. For a lap or two in the sea, the deep and clear blue waters of [Gopalpur Beach](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/puri/gopalpur-beach.html) are exquisite. White surf splashing on the golden sand makes Gopalpur-on-sea as one of the finest beaches on the eastern coast. White surf and fine sand offer great opportunities for visitors to indulge in water sports like jet skiing and banana boat rides.[Visakhapatnam](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/vishakhapatnam.html), in Andhra Pradesh is noted for its sublime beaches. Possibly the most popular spot in the city is the beautiful [Ramakrishna Beach](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/vishakhapatnam/ramakrishna-beach.html). Popularly known as the RK beach, it attracts locals and tourists alike. Visit the beach to witness ethereal views of sunsets amidst its bustling yet calming environment.

While beach-hopping, tourists can also get the chance to witness some of the local cultures like the India Surf Festival in Odisha that sees displays of Stand-up Paddle (SUP) surfing. At the [International Sand Art Festival](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/puri/listicles/things-to-do/international-sand-art-festival.html) at the Chandrabhaga Beach in Puri, one can see the talented artists of the country and even abroad make gorgeous arts.

**Kanyakumari Beach**

Ensconced in the southernmost part of India, the Kankyakumari Beach is settled at the confluence of the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. Witnessing the varied hues of the waters of the three merging into one to form a unique palette is a surreal sight. It also has multi-coloured sand that makes the experience of strolling on it an unforgettably beautiful experience. However, the best reason to visit this beach is the spellbinding sunset and sunrise. Watch the sky painted in myriad hues as the sun dips or peeps out of the water. You can also shop for knick-knacks and local handicrafts at the beach. For a spectacular bird's eye view, you can head to the lighthouse on the beach. Tourists can also indulge in adventure activities and water sports at the beach and those looking for a quieter experience can trek down to the beach. The Kanyakumari Beach is located around 10 km from the heart of the city. It was earlier known as Cape Comorin.

***9.Hill Stations***

It would not be an understatement to say that the hill stations of India so enraptured the British that they sought to discover more and more of them and mint them after themselves. [Dalhousie](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/dalhousie.html) in Himachal Pradesh, named after Lord Dalhousie, the then governor-general of India, or [Horsely Hills](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/tirupati/horsley-hills.html) Andhra Pradesh, which gets its name from the district collector of Cuddappah district, WD Horsely, are only two of the many hill stations that the British favoured in India. Even today, the hill stations of India remain stunningly beautiful destinations for globe-trotters. From the snow-capped Himalayas in Uttarakhand to the exotic hills of Darjeeling in the east, the Indian sub-continent has no dearth of delightful hilly towns that rarely fail to mesmerise a visitor.

A piece of paradise, [Gulmarg](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/gulmarg.html), is the cherry on top. Known as a meadow of flowers ('Gul' means flower and 'marg' means pathway), it is a popular [skiing](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/gulmarg/listicles/things-to-do/skiing.html) destination, and its huge pine forests, steep slopes and valleys present a picturesque setting to visitors. Not just serene and calm, but hilly terrain in India has been developed so as to let one indulge in adrenaline-gushing activities as well. The hill station of [Manali](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/manali.html) is one such beauty that is a hotspot for adventure sports like [paragliding](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/manali/listicle/things-to-do/paragliding.html) [(Bir-Billing),](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/manali/listicle/things-to-do/bir-billing.html) while [Auli](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/rishikesh/things-to-do/skiing-in-auli.html), in Uttarakhand is a popular landing pad for winter adventure sports.The Valley of Gods, [Kullu](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/manali/kullu.html), is a dreamy place that is flooded by visitors and spiritual devotees alike. Another noteworthy destination is the [Nandi hills](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/bengaluru/nandi-hills.html) in Karnataka from where one can get a glorious view of a sunrise. Lying in the lap of the Himalayas, the state of Uttarakhand boasts several mesmeric hill stationsincluding [Nainital](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/nainital.html), [Kausani](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/kausani.html), [Mussoorie](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/mussoorie.html) and [Almora](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/almora.html). Moreover, pilgrimage destinations like the popular char dham –Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri – invite travellers from far and wide.

The gentle slopes and pleasant climes of some of the hills in the country favour tea tourism, which is slowly catching pace among travellers. The verdant stretches of the hills of [Darjeeling](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/darjeeling.html), also called the Queen of Hill Stations, boast [tea gardens](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/darjeeling/happy-valley-tea-garden.html) that are a sight to behold. [Munnar](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/munnar.html) in Kerala is rife with miles and miles of lush tea plantations that leave one in awe. Also known as Blue Mountains, Nilgiris in Tamil Nadu have acres of sprawling tea plantations that give a good produce throughout the year. Tour through these gardens and soak in the rich and aromas of various varieties like the Black tea and Oolong.

When it comes to ferocious grandeur and logic-defying natural phenomenon, [Leh](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/leh-ladakh.html) in  Jammu and Kashmir makes for an enthralling visit. Hosting the famous [Magnetic Hill](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/leh-ladakh/magnetic-hill.html), where gravity takes a back seat and cars are pulled uphill, the place holds a particular charm for thrill-seekers.

**Dalhousie**

Perched atop a rocky ridge, with snow-clad Dhauladhar mountains and rolling emerald valleys adding to its natural beauty, Dalhousie, in Himachal Pradesh, is a quaint hill town perfect for a relaxing holiday. Lined with tall pine and deodar trees and dotted with pristine lakes and waterfalls, Dalhousie mesmerises you with its natural bounty. No wonder this secluded town was a favourite summer retreat of the British before Independence! The town preserves many remnants from its past and various quaint churches are a testimony to the colonial era. Dalhousie was named after the then governor general of British India, Lord Dalhousie, in 1854. Sprawling colonial-era buildings that are liberally scattered throughout the town, are a testament to Dalhousie's Victorian charm. Its beauty is further complemented by River Ravi flowing close by. This hill station also offers amazing views of the snow-capped Pir Panjal mountain range. Pines, oaks, rhododendrons and a number of other types of trees cover the mountain slopes. An ideal place to unwind, the hill station is a treasure of ancient temples, art, handicrafts and a rich cultural heritage that has been preserved since the 6th century. As you soak in the natural and architectural beauty, don't forget to sample the delicacies the town has to offer. From chha ghosht to patande, there's a lot on offer.

***10.Rivers***

Some are considered as gods and goddesses and revered, while others are the lifelines of the settlements around them. Such is the prominence of rivers in India that the country itself has been named after the Indus river the finds mention in Indian epics. Also, referred to as the Indus Valley civilisation, the northern part of India flourished near the river. Rivers in India are not just natural wonders but also the abode of holiness and the Sapta Sindhu or the seven sacred rivers are the most prominent, including the Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati, Godavari, Krishna, Brahmaputra and Narmada.

Spurting from the majestic Gangotri Glacier in the Western Himalayas, the holiest of holies, River Ganga (Ganges) is among the largest rivers in the country. Bhagirathi, as it is called in Uttarakhand from where it originates, streams till Devprayag, and merges with Alaknanda to form the Ganga river. Where this mighty river meets with River Yamuna, the second holiest river of India originating from the Yamunotri Glacier, the [sangam](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/allahabad/sangam.html) or confluence at Prayagraj, is a much-worshipped point where devotees take a dip into the waters with a belief that it would absolve them of their sins. The [sangam](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/allahabad/sangam.html) presents a spectacular sight when the holy and grand Ganga arti (a fire ritual) is held there, with hundreds of earthen lamps floating in the river. Prayagraj is also the site of the renowned [Kumbh Mela](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/allahabad/kumbh-mela.html), which is easily the largest congregation in the world. Ganga drains into the [Sundarbans](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/sundarbans.html) delta in the Bay of Bengal, creating the largest river delta in the world, with River Brahmaputra.The fickle and ferocious Brahmaputra finds its source in the Himalayas in Tibet. Encompassing the state of Assam, the river is home to many beautiful islands like Majuli, one of the largest riverine islands, that owe their rich diversity and fertile landscape to its generous bounty. Cruising along this river is an experience not easily forgotten. Travel along the lit [Guwahati](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/guwahati.html) city, to the dense and swampy expanse of [Kaziranga National Park](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/kaziranga/kaziranga-national-park.html) and [world heritage sites](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/experiences/unesco-world-heritage-sites.html), and drink in the beautiful sights during this water safari. Moreover, the fascinating wildlife and bird species finding shelter in the lush forests around the river, make for a thrilling wildlife sighting. The river also skirts various ancient ruins, Hindu temples, colonial palaces etc.

The second largest river in the country, Godavari, originating from [Trimbak,](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/nashik/trimbakeshwar-temple.html) is also counted among the seven sacred rivers of the country. This spot has been consecrated by the famous [Trimbakeshwar Temple,](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/nashik/trimbakeshwar-temple.html) dedicated to Lord Shiva. The delta of the Godavari is covered by Coringa mangrove forests, which are the second largest mangrove forest in India. The fertile basin of River Godavari and Krishna, the fourth longest river, is the nesting site of the rare Olive Ridley turtles.

Streaming into the striking [Shivasamudram Falls](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/mysore/listicles/things-to-do/shivanasamudra-falls.html), the second biggest waterfall in India, River Cauvery or Kaveri, originates from the Brahmagiri Hill in the Western Ghat. Traversing the states of [Tamil Nadu](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/states/tamil-nadu.html) and [Karnataka](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/states/karnataka.html), the river falls into the Bay of Bengal.

With its rippling silver waters, River Pamba looks like a stream flowing from paradise's pools. Its banks are dotted with religious landmarks, while the river itself is a veritable signature of Kerala's tradition and culture. Birthing from the Pulachimalai Hill in the Western Ghats, Pamba empties into the beautiful and pristine [Vembanad Lake](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/kottayam/vembanad-lake.html), which is famous for its luxurious [houseboats cruises](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/alappuzha/houseboat-cruise.html). Gushing through various medicinal plants and herbs, the river absorbs a multitude of curative properties, thereby earning its reputation for washing away one's sins. The much-revered [Sabarimala Temple](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/kochi/sabarimala.html), nestled amid luxuriant green forests and grasslands also lies on the sandy banks of the river.

Originating from the Aravalli range in Rajasthan, the Saraswati river, a tributary of Alaknanda river, submerges in the [Rann of Kutch](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/bhuj/rann-of-kutch.html). It passes through areas of [Patan](https://www.incredibleindia.org/content/incredible-india-v2/en/destinations/patan.html) and Sidhpur. Ensconced in the Amarkantak Hill, in eastern Madhya Pradesh, River Narmada originates from Narmada Kund, a small tank. Flowing into the Arabian Sea, the river is famous for the Narmada parikrama (circumambulation), which involves travelling by foot from one bank to the river to the other. The whole process takes about two to three years.

***11.Wildlife Sanctuaries***

The land of India is bestowed with bountiful natural beauty that shelters diverse wildlife. From lush forests and salt deserts to rugged mountains and vast marine stretches, India's wildlife sanctuaries are home to unique species of flora and fauna. Some of the top sanctuaries in the country that are ideal for a wildlife game drive are listed below.The land of India is bestowed with bountiful natural beauty that shelters diverse wildlife. From lush forests and salt deserts to rugged mountains and vast marine stretches, India's wildlife sanctuaries are home to unique species of flora and fauna. Some of the top sanctuaries in the country that are ideal for a wildlife game drive are listed below.

**Sariska Wildlife Sanctuary, Rajasthan**

The former hunting reserve of the maharaja of Alwar, the Sariska valley is home to a variety of flora and fauna. The park has populations of tigers, nilgai, sambar, chital etc. One can spot Indian porcupine, striped hyenas, leopards during evenings. The place is a paradise for bird lovers as it shelters a large population of Indian peafowl, crested serpent eagles, sand grouse, golden-backed woodpeckers, great Indian horned owls, tree pies, vultures and many others.

Most of the landscape of the sanctuary is made of dry deciduous forests, which flank the serene Siliserh Lake in the northeast. The sanctuary is strewn with ruins of ancient temples dating back to the 10th and 11th centuries. Some of the highlights are the ruins of the Kankwari Fort and the 10th-century Neelkanth temples. The way to the temples is rough but the architecture and the Khajuraho-like carvings will simply leave the visitor in awe of the place. The temples are 30 km inside the reserve wherein one can spot beautiful birds such as peacocks. There is also a monolithic stone statue of the Jain tirthankar, Shantinath, about 100 m away from the temples. Another interesting site of religious importance in the Sariska Sanctuary is the Pandupol, which is believed to be the place where Bhima (the strongest of the Pandavas) defeated the gigantic demon Hidimb and earned the hand of his sister Hidimba. It is also believed that Bhima took refuge here while the Pandavas were on their exile. One can find a number of langurs, peafowl, spur fowls in the area.

**Hemis Wildlife Sanctuary, Ladakh**

Named after the Hemis Monastery, Hemis Wildlife Sanctuary is spread across an area of 600 sq km. Comprising the catchments of Markha, Rumbak and Sumdah nalas, it is located on the west bank of the River Indus. Spotted with rocks and boulders, the Hemis Sanctuary's terrain is characterised by rugged valleys that have vast tracts of grasslands and several dense patches of shrubs and trees. The sanctuary has been identified as a snow leopard reserve and is also known for beasts that are usually found at such altitudes like the rare shapu, bharal, wolf, Pallas' cat, ibex, Tibetan argali and the Ladakh urial. Since the bharal and urial are found in large numbers here, it is easy to sight them. Over 30 species of avifauna have been spotted here, of which the most common are the Himalayan snowcock and the Chukar partridge.