



Photo: Tristan Pinto

The Best Times to Visit India

Excerpted from an article by Meagan Drillinger

India is a massive country, home to more than 1 billion people. Complex, intricate, overwhelming, and beautiful, there are many reasons to visit the South Asia destination, and many things to consider before booking a fabulous trip.

"India is not only about forts, palaces, and temples; it's about five-star deluxe properties, delicious food, and the human experience," says Marion Miller, an India travel specialist with Micato Safaris and a [Travel + Leisure A-List Advisor](#).

That said, Miller also wants travelers to know that there are better — and worse — times to arrive. "India is not a year-round destination," she says. "Within the timeframe that you travel to India, there are also optimal times; it just depends on where you want to go." Read on to learn about the best times to visit India, and which stretches of the year to avoid.

Related: [Marion Miller's 14-day Trip Around India](#)



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Best Times to Visit India for Smaller Crowds

With such a tremendous number of residents, plus nearly 20 million tourists per year, you simply have to expect crowds in India year-round. That said, there are times of day when crowds may be smaller.

"When you see [monuments like] the Taj Mahal, visit in the morning. Then it is very calm," says Miller. "We usually go very early in the morning, around 5:30 a.m., so that we are the first in line. Then it is less crowded and you can get those famous photos. There are crowds [in India]; you can't really get away from that."



PHOTO: GAUTIER HOUBA/TRAVEL + LEISURE

Best Times to Visit India for Good Weather

Determining the best weather is dependent on where in India you want to visit. The country is the seventh largest in the world in terms of landmass, so the weather can be dramatically different from one part to another.

"Northern India has its seasons, just like Europe and the U.S.," says Miller. "I love October, because temperatures are lovely; it's between 75 and 85 degrees, with a slight nip in the air, something that says fall is coming."

November is the same as October, except temperatures dip a little bit more, between 70 and 80 degrees. In the northern part of India, you may even need a light jacket by December. Miller says February and March are lovely, too, as spring begins and the flowers start to bloom.

"The south is tropical," she said. "The coastline, like Chennai, Goa, and Bangalore, will have more humid temperatures, and there is not much difference in temperature there during the year."

Best Times to Visit India for Lower Prices

Between mid-April and mid-September, India has its monsoon season, and temperatures soar up to nearly 110 degrees. If you are looking for travel deals, this would be the time, but it's also one of the least favorable stretches during which to visit; the extreme heat and torrential rains often deter travelers.



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Best Times to Visit India to See Tigers

A caveat to the above: monsoon season is one of the best times to visit India if you want to spot the country's majestic resident tigers.

"Tigers are very elusive creatures," says Miller. "They are beautiful animals, and they are easily seen when it is hot because they are hunting for water. I had an avid photographer visit in April last year and he saw 26 tigers."



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Best Times to Visit India for Festivals

When it comes to festivals in India, there is never a wrong time, as the country always has a reason to celebrate. Two of the largest festivals in India are Diwali and Holi. The holidays run on a lunar calendar, so the dates change every year, but Diwali is typically in the winter and Holi is typically in the spring.

"Diwali is the Festival of Light," says Miller. "It's a lot of lights, people give each other gifts, and it's also a time where they shoot lots of fireworks into the sky."

Holi is the festival that welcomes spring. It is a festival of colors, where anyone and everyone throws colorful dye at each other, filling the air, their clothing, faces, and hair with bright, springtime hues.

"There is also Dussehra [usually in October], which is the festival of good prevailing over evil," Miller says. "Another festival called Raksha Bandhan [usually in August] celebrates the connection between siblings. Plus there are so many gods and goddesses, and they are all being celebrated."