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MARCH 2025

ZEST

IN THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT
BY ORANGE DMC

HIDDEN HIMALAYAS

With summer just around the corner, the mountains are calling our name. The Himalayas inspire awe and amazement.

From April onwards, the Himalayan region springs to life with a variety of colourful festivals and events. Easter is the perfect time to go hiking, trekking or rafting in the mountains.

If you love nature and wildlife, this is an excellent time to head into the national parks in the mountain region and observe amazing flora and fauna as it springs to life after winter. The hospitality in these areas is heartwarming. Warm, friendly and down to earth, the Himalayan folk are always ready to welcome visitors to their corner of the planet.

As the winter chill fades, Ladakh gears up for an incredible season! If you're an outdoor enthusiast, there is plenty to do. From motorbiking through the high passes to yoga in the apricot orchards or birding in the Nubra Valley, you'll be completely swept away by the sense of peace, tranquility, and vast open spaces that Ladakh offers.

The thick forests and meadows of Himachal Pradesh are just across the valley from Ladakh. This charming state is ideal for nature lovers, hikers and those who want to experience Himalayan culture and cuisine.

Are you ready to explore the Himalayas' hidden beauty? Reach out to our team to start planning the trip of a lifetime today.

Best Regards,
Manan Mahajan



LIVING COLOUR

2025

CULTURAL CALENDAR



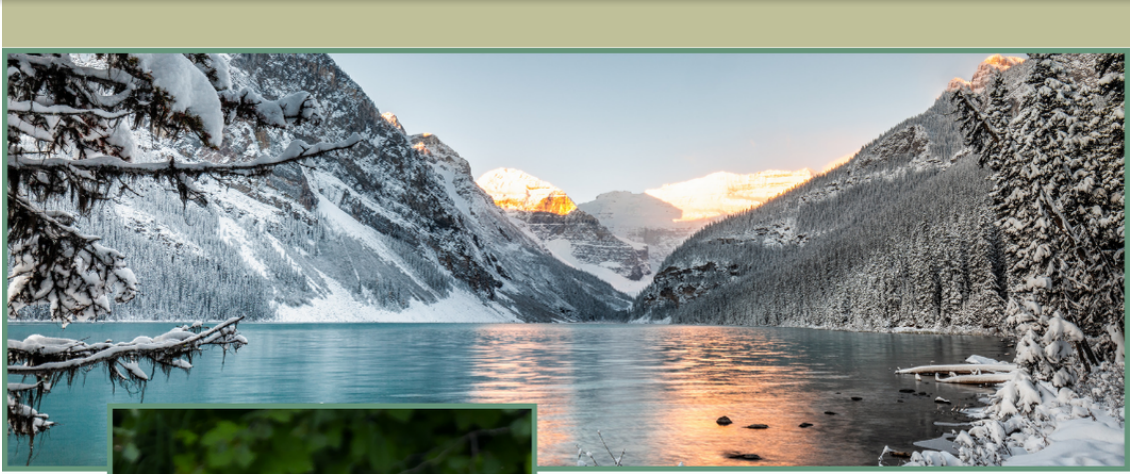
APRICOT BLOSSOM FESTIVAL, LEH ▼

Ladakh is known for its immense apricot orchards. In mid-April, these trees shake off their winter stupor and burst into bloom! The apricot blossom festival is a joyous event, and Ladakh celebrates it with a festival of cultural performances, handicrafts and food.



▼ BUDDHA JAYANTI, KATHMANDU

Buddha Jayanti is celebrated to commemorate the birth and spiritual enlightenment of Lord Buddha in May. While the festival takes place across Nepal, Swayambhunath Stupa in Kathmandu displays an effigy of Lord Buddha's body, and thousands of pilgrims attend this celebration.



01. BROWN BEARS IN LADAKH

The Himalayan Brown Bear is native to Ladakh and one of the largest mammals found in the region. Venture into this rugged terrain to observe these bears in their natural habitat. Once the winter snow starts to thaw, the Brown Bears come out of their hibernation and can be seen foraging on the craggy mountain slopes. The highlight is to see a family of them gamboling around playfully with one another!

02. ELEPHANTS IN RAJAJI

The Asiatic Elephant is a magnificent creature and observing this animal in the wild is a fantastic experience. With around 450-600 elephants in the park, Rajaji in North India has the highest density of Asiatic Elephants in the world. The dense forest has a hilly terrain with the river running through it, and it is a wonderful park to explore.



WILDLIFE IN THE HIMALAYAS

MARKHORS IN KAZINAG

The Himalayas are full of rare ungulates, and the Markhor is an iconic species. With its spiral horns and shaggy coat, it has a distinctive character. Kazinag, on the banks of the Jhelum River in Kashmir, is one of the best places to see these beautiful animals in the wild.



RED PANDAS IN SINGALILA

Singalila, in the eastern Himalayas, is a great place to spot the Red Panda. This charming animal is critically endangered, and Singalila is one of the last natural habitats for this photogenic animal. September is the best time, as the wild orchids are in bloom as one treks through the forest.

05. EAGLES IN BINSAR

Fascinated by raptors? Head into Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary to see them soar through the mountains. Golden eagles, Tawny eagles, Bald eagles and Bonelli's eagles, these are just a few of the varieties that you can spot here. Binsar is a birder's paradise, so if you're a birdwatcher, add it to your list now.



WILDERNESS ESCAPE



DIPHLU RIVER LODGE, KAZIRANGA

With its thatched roofs and charming, rustic interiors, Diphlu River Lodge is a delightful place to stay when visiting Kaziranga National Park. Relax on the long verandahs with a cool drink as you gaze out over the wilderness that covers the landscape.

The interiors are enhanced with bamboo and local handloom textiles, creating an inviting ambience.

Excellent naturalists and well-organized game drives make forays into the park a pleasure. The food is fresh and delicious, and the service is welcoming and friendly.



WANDERLUST IN LADAKH

LEH & PANGONG-TSO

Situated at the top of the world, Ladakh is characterized by a sense of peace and tranquility. Leh is the cultural and economic center of the region, from where one begins to explore the countryside.

LEH

A bustling city, Leh was once a royal capital and the Leh Palace is a close replica of Potala Palace in Tibet. It was an important stop on the old trade routes, particularly the Silk Road creating a cultural amalgamation that has percolated down over centuries. Stupas, mosques, monasteries and temples give it a distinct spiritual character. The historic district is a heritage site, which is included in the World Monuments Fund list.

PANGONG TSO

Icy blue waters reflect the beauty of the landscape. Calm and serene, this is the perfect place to go and indulge in a moment of quiet contemplation.

Pangong Tso means the high grassland lake. It is situated on the Indo-Tibet border, and one can often observe flocks of migratory birds flying overhead. The drive from Leh to Pangong is also very picturesque. One can either cross the high Chang-La pass, or approach it through the dramatic Nubra Valley with its gushing rivers and stark sand dunes, against the backdrop of the mountains.

WANDERLUST IN SIKKIM

WEEKEND IN GANGTOK

With stunning views of Kanchenjunga, Gangtok is a great place to base oneself while exploring Sikkim. Discover a variety of lakes, waterfalls and old world monasteries in the vicinity of the city.

The Rumtek Monastery, which is located within a short distance of the city, is well worth a visit. It has a distinct Tibetan aesthetic, and a lovely collection of old Buddhist art.

If you're a nature lover, then head over to Tsomgo Lake, surrounded by dramatic mountains. Pause for a moment at the Shiva Temple to seek a blessing before you explore this stunning landscape.

For those who enjoy hiking and biking, there are several trails that you can explore within a short distance of Gangtok itself. The best time to visit is from mid-March to mid-May, when the rhododendron is in full bloom. Sikkim is also a cradle of tribal culture and the folklore is full of great stories and incredible character. If you're interested in Tibetan culture, then the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology is worth a visit.

Sikkim is a wonderful entry-point into the north-east, as well as Bhutan. Ask us today to learn more about the Eastern Himalayas and how you can include Sikkim in your next holiday.



WHERE TO STAY?

The Taj Guras Kutir Resort and Spa is a great place to base yourself and explore the area.

Spacious rooms with gorgeous views make for a comfortable stay. After exploring the city, return to your hotel for a soothing spa treatment, or enjoy a cocktail at the Guras Bar & Lounge. Excellent service and tasty cuisine make this a top choice in the city.

SHIMLA & MASHOBRA

With its bustling bazaar and old world architecture, Shimla is full of charm and colonial heritage.

Much of its charm lies along Mall, the famous street which is lined with shops selling handicrafts, cafes serving steaming momos, and vendors selling their wares. If you want to get a feel for the city's folk, head up to the Ridge, a popular spot to go people-watching and catch some stunning views.

For those who enjoy history, Viceregal Lodge is a must. The architecture is simply incredible, and it speaks of regal grandeur that prevailed in Shimla the Raj era. The former residence of Lord Dufferin, its Jacobean facade is imposing and elegant.

Shimla's location is stunning and just a stone's throw from some terrific walking and hiking pathways. If you're a nature lover and enjoy being outdoors, then head over to Green Valley, with its lush landscape and fabulous mountain vistas.

After exploring Shimla, head over to Mashobra. The Reserve Forest Sanctuary is a great place for active adventure such as hiking and rafting. If you're a bird watcher or a nature photographer, this is a must. Head over to Lakkar Bazaar to find some carved wooden handicrafts, before heading back to your hotel for a relaxing evening.



Colonial Heritage. Himalayan beauty.



HIMALAYAN KINGDOMS

BHUTAN







Did you know...

According to Bhutanese mythology, the dragon, or "Druk," symbolizes protection by the Gods and spiritual energy.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURES!

Bhutan is a great destination for those who enjoy being outdoors! From active adventure to wildlife and nature, there's plenty to see and do.

HIKING & BIKING:

If you're a hiker, there are plenty of trails that take you through the forest and into the magnificent valleys of Bhutan. If you prefer to do a day hike and then come back to your hotel each evening, Paro is the ideal place to base yourself.

The Trans-Bhutan Trail is ideal for those who enjoy being on the road. Whether its on foot or on your bike, the Trans-Bhutan Trail is a once-in-a-lifetime journey, that takes you into the heart of the Himalayan countryside.

RIVER-RAFTING:

If you enjoy being out on the water, then head over to Punakha for some river-rafting. Beautiful scenery and an exhilarating ride makes this the perfect adventure!

PARO

UMA PARO

Set in the beautiful Paro Valley with stunning views overlooking the mountains, Uma Paro is a luxurious retreat. Situated just a short drive from the international airport, it is a great place to start or end your journey in Bhutan. The rooms are decorated with touches of Bhutanese craftsmanship and elegant, spacious lines which let natural light in.

The Como Shambhala Spa is a haven for your senses and the perfect place to unwind after an active adventure in Bhutan. Yoga is offered to all guests, and is a delightful way to tap into your inner soul in these pristine environs.

The food is thoughtfully prepared with fresh ingredients from the kitchen garden on the property. Excellent service and genuine warmth make this one of our favourite resorts in Paro!



PUNAKHA

UMA PUNAKHA

Overlooking the Punakha Valley and the Mo Chhuu river, Uma Punakha is a sanctuary for your senses.

Beautiful Bhutanese textiles and rugs add a touch of colour to the wood, stone and tile structure.

Spacious rooms and gorgeous villas create a sense of vastness and privacy. Stunning views and a serene landscape add to the tranquil ambience.

The food is a blend of South Asian influences and features Bhutanese and Indian specialties on the menu.

The property is ideally located to explore Punakha and the surroundings. After a delightful day exploring the Bhutanese countryside or visiting a local monastery, come home to a soothing spa treatment or a delicious meal.

Punakha is within easy reach of Paro and Thimphu. If you'd like to include a visit to this gorgeous valley, contact ORANGE DMC today to plan an incredible Bhutanese adventure!



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