

India's Fantastic Festivals



Offer them an opportunity to really "experience" India

Nothing captures India's spirituality, mystique, and rich cultural diversity more memorably than its year-round festivals and other special events. They include centuries-old religious and seasonal celebrations, as well as spectacular cultural and artistic events – the most important of which attract participants and spectators from all over India and around the world.

So, whether your clients are planning a first-time or return trip to India, give them the opportunity to really experience it by including one of the following 2014 events in their itinerary:

HOLI – March 16-18

Marking the end of winter, the joyous Festival of Colors is celebrated throughout India. The "Holi Fire" cleanses the air of evil spirits and bad vibes, and the next day, participants spray each other with vivid colors. The revelry ends with a feast.

THISSUR POORAM – May 9

One of India's most famous temple festivals, Thissur Pooram is celebrated in the state of Kerala. It features decorated elephants, drums, and umbrellas, traditional music and spectacular fireworks.

PURI RATH YATRA – June 29-July 7

Known as the "Chariot Festival," this famed Hindu festival is held in Puri, Odissa. It is highlighted by the construction and decoration of three huge chariots, each over 44 ft high, that are pulled by devotees.

HEMIS FESTIVAL – July 7 & 8

Held in Leh, the former capital of Ladakh, the festival celebrates the birthday of Guru Padamasambhava by masked monks who dance to a cacophony of drums, cymbals and long horns. The surrounding landscape is unspoiled and picturesque.

KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI – August 17

Celebrated across India, this event commemorates the birthday of Lord Krishna, a highly venerated God. Festivities feature re-enactments of the God's life – from his birth in prison to his childhood pranks to his miracles.

GANESH CHATURTHI – August 29

The festival marks the birthday of Lord Ganesha, the "God of knowledge and the remover of obstacles" and the son of God Shiva and Parvati. It's celebrated in Mumbai and the states of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh over a 10-day period.

PUSHKAR CAMEL FAIR – Oct. 30-Nov. 6

A spectacle on an epic scale, this huge event draws farmers, traders and villagers – and over 10,000 camels, horses and cattle from all over Rajasthan. The festival attracts thousands of visitors.

For more information about these special events and other once-in-a-lifetime experiences in India, including trekking and skiing in the Himalayas, wildlife photography, and Ayurveda spa retreats, contact Air India or the Government of India Tourist Office.

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