

# Diwali Travel Guide

What to know before traveling to India during Diwali — what the festival actually involves, where to experience it well, and how to handle the logistics.

## WHY THIS GUIDE

Diwali is one of the most magical times to be in India, but it's also one of the most logistically demanding — flights, trains and hotels fill up, and a lot of general festival content doesn't prepare you for what the days actually look and sound like. This guide is specific to traveling around Diwali itself.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

Diwali, the festival of lights, typically falls in autumn and is celebrated nationwide with regional variations.

- Homes, shops and public spaces are decorated with oil lamps (diyas), candles and lights in the days leading up to the main day
- Fireworks are widespread, especially in the evenings, and can be loud and continuous in cities
- Family gatherings, gift exchanges and festive sweets are central to the celebration
- Many businesses, banks and some attractions close or reduce hours around the main festival days
- Markets are especially busy in the lead-up as people shop for the festival
- Air quality can dip in some cities during the festival due to fireworks — worth checking if anyone in your group has respiratory sensitivities

Diwali follows the lunar calendar and the exact date shifts each year — confirm the date for your travel year before booking.

## WHERE TO EXPERIENCE IT WELL

- Cities with strong markets and old-quarter neighborhoods tend to have the most visible lights and decoration displays
- Some regions hold large-scale lamp-lighting events on riverbanks or public squares worth seeking out
- Staying with or near a local family or in a homestay can offer a more personal view of how the festival is actually celebrated
- Heritage hotels in festival-prone cities often host their own Diwali decorations and events for guests
- Smaller towns can offer a quieter, more community-feeling version of the celebration than major metro fireworks displays
- Ask your hotel or guide about any local events, processions or lighting ceremonies happening during your stay

## LOGISTICS TO PLAN AROUND

- Book flights, trains and hotels well in advance — this is one of the highest-demand travel periods of the year
- Expect higher prices for accommodation and transport in the days immediately around the festival
- Build buffer time into travel days, as traffic and crowding increase in the lead-up to the main festival day
- Confirm which attractions, restaurants or services you're relying on will actually be open during the festival days

- Pack earplugs if you're sensitive to noise — fireworks can continue into the night in residential areas
- If traveling with kids or anyone noise-sensitive, choose accommodation a bit removed from the densest firework zones