

Winter North India Packing List

What to pack for North India's winter — cold mornings, warm afternoons, smoggy cities, and the layering system that handles all three in one day.

WHY WINTER NORTH INDIA PACKING IS DIFFERENT

North India in winter swings harder between morning and afternoon than most travelers expect — early starts can be near-freezing in the hills and chilly even in the plains, while midday sun still feels warm. Delhi and other northern cities also see heavy seasonal smog from November through February, which affects what you breathe more than what you wear. Add desert destinations like Rajasthan, where nights drop sharply despite warm days, and a single-season packing list misses the spread.

CLOTHING

- Thermal base layers for early mornings, especially in Delhi, Punjab, and Rajasthan's desert nights
- Warm jacket or padded coat — December and January mornings can be genuinely cold
- Lightweight layers for midday, when temperatures rise faster than expected
- Scarf or shawl, useful for both warmth and as a modesty layer at religious sites
- Warm socks and a wool or fleece hat
- One smart-casual outfit for hotel dinners
- Gloves if traveling to hill areas or higher-altitude stops

FOOTWEAR & ACCESSORIES

- Closed, comfortable walking shoes with good grip for cold stone steps at forts and monuments
- Warm socks thick enough for early starts but easy to pair with shoes that may come off at temples
- Sunglasses — winter sun is still strong at midday
- Small daypack for layers you'll shed as the day warms up
- Lip balm and moisturizer — cold, dry air chaps skin fast

HEALTH, DOCUMENTS & TECH

- N95 or pollution mask for Delhi and other northern cities during peak smog season (Nov–Feb)
- Saline nasal spray to ease dry, polluted air
- Moisturizer and lip balm for cold, dry conditions
- Personal medication, especially anything for respiratory sensitivity
- Passport/visa copy and hotel confirmations
- Portable charger and a universal plug adapter (India: Type C/D/M)
- Small cash reserve (₹) — markets and smaller vendors are often cash-preferred

