

Festivals & Seasons

India runs on two calendars: the one on your phone, and the one made of festivals and weather. This guide is the second one, explained for newcomers: what you'll celebrate, what closes when, how to sail through the monsoon, and the winter air plan for the north.

Oct-Nov

the festive season, India at its most festive

Jun-Sep

the monsoon, easy with a plan

IN SHORT

- Diwali, Holi, Eid and most others follow lunar calendars, so this guide gives you month windows, not fixed dates.
- Public holidays also differ state by state.
- Around the big festivals expect several closure days; check before scheduling anything official.

Nothing makes India feel like home faster than knowing what the country is about to celebrate, and nothing catches newcomers out like assuming the weather works the way it did back home. One page, both calendars: **the festivals you'll live through and the seasons you'll live in**, with the practical bits nobody thinks to mention until you are standing in your first downpour.

THE ONE RULE OF INDIAN DATES

Most festival dates move every year. Diwali, Holi, Eid and most others follow lunar calendars, so this guide gives you month windows, not fixed dates. Public holidays also differ state by state. For the exact days in your city and year, one message to your consultant settles it.

THE YEAR AT A GLANCE • MOST OF INDIA, YOUR CITY MAY VARY	
Dec to Feb	Cool and sociable. The best weather almost everywhere; north India gets genuinely cold and foggy, the south stays mild. Peak season for visitors, weddings and being outdoors.
Mar to May	Spring, then heat. Holi opens the season; by April most of the country is hot, and May is the month to plan indoor afternoons and hill escapes.

Jun to Sep

The monsoon. Arrives in Kerala in early June and moves north. Dramatic, green, occasionally disruptive, and entirely manageable with the plan below.

Oct to Nov

The festive season. Navratri, Durga Puja, Dussehra and Diwali in one glorious run. India at its warmest-hearted, and its busiest.

Windows are indicative for most of the country; the monsoon, the heat and the festival intensity all vary by region. Your consultant calibrates this page to your city.

01 THE CELEBRATIONS

The festivals you'll live through

1 Diwali • October to November

The festival of lights, and the emotional centre of the Indian year: lamps, sweets, gifts, family, fireworks. Expect several days of celebrations, generous society events, and the season when household staff often travel home. Join your society's celebrations; nobody stays a stranger through Diwali.

2 Holi • around March

The festival of colours: one morning of joyous, paint-everywhere chaos, then lunch and a nap. Wear white you can sacrifice, keep phones in zip bags, and say yes if your neighbours invite you down. It is the fastest friendship accelerator in India.

3 The autumn run-up • September to October

Navratri and Dussehra in the west and north (Gujarat dances for nine nights), Durga Puja in the east (Kolkata's grandest week). Ganesh Chaturthi sweeps Mumbai and Pune a little earlier, with processions that stop traffic and hearts alike.

4 Eid • dates move through the year

Eid al-Fitr closes Ramadan with feasting and finery; Eid al-Adha follows about ten weeks later. Both come about eleven days earlier each year: in 2026 they fell on 21 March and 27 May, and in 2027 they are expected around 10 March and 17 May. In mixed neighbourhoods expect wonderful food, closed offices, and an open invitation culture if you have Muslim friends or colleagues.

5 The harvest new years • January and April

Makar Sankranti and Pongal in January (kites in the west, sweet rice in the south), then a cluster of regional new years around April (Baisakhi in Punjab, Tamil and Bengali new years). Kerala's Onam arrives in August to September with flower carpets and feast banquets.

6 The national days and the winter close

Republic Day (26 January) and Independence Day (15 August) are fixed public holidays with parades and dry days. Christmas and New Year are celebrated warmly across urban India; Goa and the metros make a real season of it.

What festivals mean for your household

1 Closures come state by state

Banks, schools and government offices follow state holiday lists, which differ from each other and from your office's list. Around the big festivals expect several closure days; check before scheduling anything official.

2 Staff leave and the Diwali bonus

Household staff travel home for the big festivals; agree the days well in advance and plan around them. A Diwali bonus of about one month's pay is strongly expected; budget it from the day you hire. The full etiquette lives in Hiring Household Help.

3 Book travel early

The festive weeks are when huge numbers of people travel to see family. Flights and trains fill early and prices climb; if you are travelling in October or November, book when you first think of it, not when you have decided.

4 Noise, lights and late nights

Diwali brings fireworks for several nights, weddings bring bands and processions through the winter, and festival loudspeakers are part of the soundtrack. Earplugs for light sleepers, calm for pets, and a little patience: it passes, and it is joy, not disorder.

5 Deliveries and services slow down

Around the biggest festivals, grocery apps, couriers and repair visits run late or pause. Stock the kitchen two days ahead of Diwali and Holi the way you would before a long weekend at home.

Monsoon survival, the calm version

1 Before it arrives: check the home once

In May, walk the house: window seals, balcony drainage, any damp patches on ceilings or walls, and where the water would go in a hard downpour. Your landlord fixes issues far faster before the rains than during them, and your consultant can press the point.

2 Change the commute maths

Rain-hour traffic is its own physics. Add real buffer to school runs and airport trips, keep a small umbrella and a dry pair of footwear at the office, and treat waterlogged underpasses as closed roads, because they effectively are.

3 Run the home slightly drier

Cupboards get musty and leather grows fur if ignored. Air the wardrobes weekly, run dehumidifier mode on the ACs, keep silica pouches with cameras and documents, and dry-out shoes before they go back in the rack.

4 Health, without drama

Standing water breeds mosquitoes, so dusk repellent discipline matters more in these months, and street food judgement should sharpen a notch. Stick to filtered water as always. The full medical picture lives in Healthcare in India.

5 Then enjoy it

The monsoon is also chai on the balcony, green hills an hour from every city, and the best light of the year. Mumbai's monsoon is a force of nature; the city is proudest of how it carries on regardless, and within a season, so will you.

04 OCTOBER TO FEBRUARY · MAINLY THE NORTH

The winter air playbook

Northern winters, especially in Delhi NCR, bring stretches of poor air quality, typically from late October into January. It is real, it is seasonal, and families who set up once in October sail through it. This is the plan, not the panic.

1 Purifiers in the rooms you live in

Bedrooms first, living room second, sized to the room and running before the season peaks, with a spare set of filters bought in October when stock is easy. Your consultant helps source and set up during settling-in.

2 Watch the number, not the haze

Put an air-quality app on your phone and let the AQI number make the day's calls: windows open or shut, run outdoors or on the treadmill, park day or museum day. Schools publish their own outdoor-activity policies for the season.

3 Masks for the peak days

A small stock of well-fitting N95 masks covers the handful of genuinely bad days, commutes and auto rides included. The rest of the season, ordinary judgement does the job.

4 Seal the easy gaps

Door sweeps and window seals do more per rupee than any gadget, and they help against summer heat and monsoon damp too. One handyman visit in October sets the whole season up.

5 Keep perspective

South and coastal cities run much milder seasons, Delhi's worst weeks are a known, plannable window, and the same winter brings the north's finest months: crisp mornings, gardens in bloom, and outdoor life from February onwards.

05 YOUR SUPPORT

What IKAN does for you

- ✓ Your consultant can confirm **the exact festival and holiday dates for your city and year**, so plans never rest on a moving date
 - ✓ Your consultant can help raise **pre-monsoon fixes** with the landlord while there is still time to act
 - ✓ We help **source and set up purifiers and seasonal kit** as part of settling-in, sized to your actual rooms
 - ✓ We make **the festival introductions**: your society's Diwali evening, the Holi gathering, the celebrations worth saying yes to
-

The seasonal once-a-year list • one-screen check

- ☐ **May**: home monsoon check done, landlord fixes requested in writing
 - ☐ **June**: commute buffers set, office shoes and umbrella staged
 - ☐ **September**: festive travel booked, staff festival leave agreed
 - ☐ **October**: purifiers running, spare filters in, gaps sealed, AQI app on
 - ☐ **Diwali week**: staff bonus given, kitchen stocked, society invitation accepted
-

Learn the second calendar and India stops surprising you, then starts delighting you. Say yes to the festivals, respect the seasons, and the year here becomes the thing you miss most when you leave.

YOUR IKAN RELOCATIONS TEAM

ikan.com • enquiry@ikan.com • +91 11 4049 0000

Where expertise meets empathy, supporting your move to India, every step of the way. Festival dates follow lunar calendars and public holidays vary by state and year; your consultant confirms the exact dates for your city. This guide is web-first; it prints cleanly from this page and joins the downloadable pack at its next rebuild.