

10 places in India to experience Dussehra Celebrations

by Ami Bhat (Lonely Planet Author) October 11 2016



Immersing the Durga idols in the river
Image courtesy: ©RITWICK DEY/Lonely Planet

Dussehra is the 10-day festival that is marked across India. Here are 10 places in India to experience the different flavours of Dussehra.

Kolkata

Go on a pandal-hopping spree where you can see the various statues of elaborately decorated Goddess Durga. Partake of the bhog and sample the famous Bengali sweets. The celebrations culminate with the immersing of the Durga idols in the river.

Kota

Kota is known for its month-long Dussehra mela. Artisans and craftsmen from neighbouring towns sell their wares here. You can enjoy cultural performances while sampling the best of Rajasthani food. Remember to stay back for the final Dussehra event where 75 ft-tall statues of Ravana, Meghnath and Kumbhakarna are set ablaze.

Barara

Barara, near Chandigarh, boasts of the tallest statue of Ravana made for Dussehra. The last known height was 200 ft and it promises to increase every year. Colourful markets, foot-tapping music and dance add to the festive atmosphere.

Madikeri

A perfect time to combine a visit to the cool coffee county of Coorg is during the Madikeri Dussehra celebrations. Here you can experience festivities for 10 days where they honour the Mariamma Goddess. Karaga dance marks the occasion.



Delhi
Image courtesy: Flickr/Public.Resource.Org/CC BY 2.0

Delhi

Delhi dons a new avatar during Dussehra with hundreds of special stages set up for the Ram Lila musicals across Old Delhi and elsewhere. Sky-high effigies of Ravana, Meghnath and Kumbhakarna are set on fire on the last day of Navaratri.



Kullu Dussehra
Image courtesy: Flickr/ellen reitman/CC BY-SA 2.0

Kullu

Kullu Dussehra starts on the day when the festivities across the rest of the country end. Over 200 deities from neighbouring villages are brought to the Lord Raghunatha Temple and carried in processions to a central place – Dhalpur Maidan. The rath yatra (chariot ride) is accompanied by local dance and music. On the last day, you can witness the burning of Lanka town – symbolised by dry grass and leaves set aflame.

Mysore Dussehra
Image courtesy: Flickr/Navrooz Singh/CC BY-ND 2.0

Mysore

The Mysore Dussehra celebrations are marked by regal grandeur. It's a royal tradition started by the Vijayanagara kings, over 400 years ago, and later continued by the Wodeyar family. Don't miss the final day Jambo Sawari where an elaborately dressed elephant with a golden howdah, carries the 750 kg heavy idol of Mysore's Goddess Chamundeshwari – the one who slew the demon Mahishasura in procession.

LONGEST DANCE FESTIVAL. The Navratri Festival (Nine Nights of Dance to honour Mother Goddess known variously as Durga, or Ambe) takes place all over G

Ahmedabad
Image courtesy: abbas tyabji/Lonely Planet

Ahmedabad

Join in for some garba and dandiya dance while you savour the mouth-watering delicacies of Gujarat. All nine evenings begin with a pooja for Ma Amba (Goddess Durga) and continue till the wee hours of morning as the locals dance the night away.

Varanasi Ramlila
Image courtesy: Wikipedia/CC BY-SA 3.0/Ankit Gupta

Varanasi

Head to Ramnagar, near Varanasi, to watch a 200-year-old tradition of the Ramayana on stage. Over a month performances of various scenes of the Ramayana are held across the town. The day of Dussehra marks Rama's victory over Ravana as a tall effigy of the demon is set ablaze in the town's main square.

Bastar
Image courtesy: Lonely Planet/ Supriya Sehgal

Bastar

Experience a tribal celebration of Dussehra at Jagdalpur with some unusual rituals. Here a local Goddess Danteshwari and the temple is the focus of celebrations. The entire festival lasts for 75 days with the last 10 days leading to Dussehra celebrations.

AUTHOR'S BIO: Ami Bhat is senior marketing professional, currently on a break to pursue full-time travel blogging. A travel enthusiast, who loves sports, photography and dancing with equal passion, Ami believes in planning a short escape for every long weekend that can come up through the year. And when she cannot travel physically, she travels virtually through words on her travel. More on: <http://www.thrillingtravel.in/>



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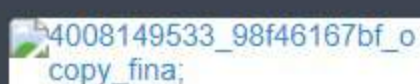
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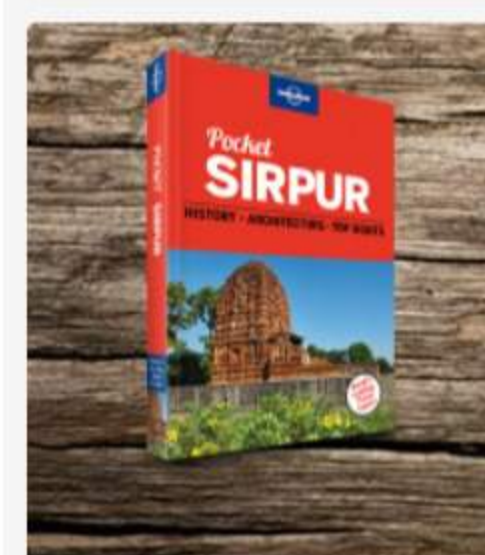
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