

Best long weekend getaways for 2017

by Ami Bhat (Lonely Planet Author) Dec 2016



Valley of Flowers
Image courtesy: Flickr/Alosh Bennett/CC BY 2.0

With 14 long weekends coming up in 2017, the year promises to be full of interesting travel experiences. So what are you waiting for? Go ahead and plan well ahead of time and ensure that you get the most out of this exciting year.

JANUARY

- 26th: Thursday (Republic day)
- 27th: Friday (take leave)
- 28th: Saturday
- 29th: Sunday

Hampi and Badami, Karnataka: Spend the weekend discovering the ancient ruined temples of Hampi that are more than 700 years old. The topography at this Unesco World Heritage Site looks magnificent with ruins of over 20 elaborate temples and many other smaller structures scattered through a rocky landscape. Experience the golden glow of sun as it sets over the ruins of Hemakuta hill. Drive down to the ancient school of sculpture at Badami (140km) and you are bound to be mesmerised by the artistic splendour of the sculptures that reside here.

FEBRUARY

- 24th: Friday (Mahashivratri)
- 25th: Saturday
- 26th: Sunday

Tarkarli, Maharashtra: This is the perfect time to hit the white sandy beaches of Tarkali – before the onset of the summer season. Plunge into the depths of the Arabian Sea with some scuba diving and snorkeling. Uncover the hidden secrets of the famed sea fort of Sindhudurg and don't forget to feast on the mouthwatering Konkani food while here.

MARCH: 2 weekends

Paragliding in Bir
Image courtesy: Wikipedia/Journojp/CC BY-SA 4.0

- 11th: Saturday
- 12th: Sunday
- 13th: Monday (Holi)

Bir, Himachal Pradesh: This is a delightful broad valley carpeted by green-gold paddy fields and hemmed in by the Dhauladhar. Enjoy the tranquil beauty of the Tibetan monasteries or just spread your wings with some paragliding over the lovely hills and valleys. You can even enjoy some scenic treks that take you past the pristine waterfalls and river.

- 25th: Saturday
- 26th: Sunday
- 27th: Monday (take leave)
- 28th: Tuesday (Gudi Padva)

Amboli, Maharashtra: This is a perfect hill station to escape the increasing summer heat in Maharashtra. Cool off under its mystical waterfalls, spend some time watching the sea from its various viewpoints. With little to do and lots to experience, this is a perfect time-out from your regular routine.

APRIL: 2 weekends

Mirik is a delightful getaway near Darjeeling
Image courtesy: Flickr/Ankit Agarwal/CC BY 2.0

- 1st: Saturday
- 2nd: Sunday
- 3rd: Monday (Take leave)
- 4th: Tuesday (Ram Navami)

Mirik, West Bengal: Head to Mirik for a tryst with the hills. Located close to Darjeeling, this tiny settlement offers lovely views of the snow-capped Kanchenjunga. Appreciate the lovely Chinese decor at the Bokar Monastery, while you enjoy the placid atmosphere of the Mirik lake.

- 13th: Thursday (Baisakhi)
- 14th: Friday (Good Friday/ Ambedkar Jayanti)
- 15th: Saturday
- 16th: Sunday (Easter)

Lansdowne, Uttarakhand: Experience leisurely walks, quiet picnics and perfect weather at Lansdowne. You can just while away your time by taking walks in the lovely hills here. Dotted along the winding roads are quaint houses built during the time of the British. You can visit Tip N Top view point.

APRIL/MAY

- 29th: Saturday
- 30th: Sunday
- 1st: Monday (Labour Day)

Chail, Himachal Pradesh: An erstwhile summer retreat of the Maharaja's, Chail is perfect to battle the summer heat and at the same time give you enough to do over the long weekend. Explore the old palace while you discover the highest cricket ground in India. Through all this, you are bound to enjoy the scent of the pine forests around you.

Tamhini Ghat
Image courtesy: Flickr/Priyanka Roy Chaudhury/CC BY 2.0

JUNE

- 24th: Saturday
- 25th: Sunday
- 26th: Monday (Eid)

Kolad, Maharashtra: This is one of the best weekends to experience the onset of the monsoon season as you race through the rapids of Kundalika River at Kolad. If river rafting is not your thing, then head to the waterfalls of Tamhini ghats. You can also, discover the old Buddhist caves at Kuda while here.

AUGUST: 2 weekends

- 12th: Saturday
- 13th: Sunday
- 14th: Monday (Krishna Janmashtami)
- 15th: Tuesday (Independence Day)
- 16th: Wednesday (Take leave)
- 17th: Thursday (Parsi new year)
- 18th: Friday (Apply for leave)
- 19th August – Saturday
- 20th August – Sunday

Valley of Flowers, Uttarakhand: Part of the vast Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, the breathtaking sight of a profusion of multi-hued wild flowers carpeting the valley is worth the trek. This week is perfect to experience the unique floral extravaganza of the Valley of Flowers. Think snowy peaks, mist-drenched mountains and gushing rivers and a valley floor carpeted with thousands of tiny, wild flowers. You can even visit Hema Kund, a holy spot close by.

- 25th: Friday (Ganesh Chaturthi)
- 26th: Saturday
- 27th: Sunday

Chikmagalur, Karnataka: The cool coffee country of Karnataka will spoil you with the choice of activities that you can do here. From nature treks, wildlife safaris to visiting gorgeous waterfalls and stunning view points – there is plenty for you to do this weekend in Chikmagalur.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

- 30th: Saturday
- 1st: Sunday
- 2nd: Monday (Gandhi Jayanti)

Bankura, West Bengal: Discover the famous terracotta temples of Bankura, surrounded by beautiful hills that are bound to thrill adventure enthusiasts. Trek along these hills and savour the famed Mecha Sandesh at Bankura.

OCTOBER

Jaisalmer fort in Rajasthan, India

Jaisalmer Fort
Image courtesy: ©Don Mammoser/Shutterstock

- 16th: Monday (Dhanteras)
- 17th: Tuesday (Choti Diwali)
- 18th: Wednesday (Diwali)
- 19th: Thursday (Govardhan Pooja)
- 20th: Friday (Bhaidooj)
- 21st: Saturday
- 22nd : Sunday

Rajasthan: With a 10-day window, there is no better time to visit the vibrant state of Rajasthan. Head out to the cultural and heritage hotspots of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur or discover the mystical sands of the deserts in Pushkar and Jaisalmer, while you relish the unique delicacies of this state.

DECEMBER

Scenic Beauty

The backwaters of Vembanad Lake in Kumarakom
Image courtesy: ©Vjay Khaitan/Lonely Planet

- 1st December – Friday (Eid)
- 2nd December – Saturday
- 3rd December – Sunday

Lambasingi, Andhra Pradesh: Better known as 'Kashmir of South India' this is one of the coldest places in South India with chilly winds and sub-zero temperatures. If you are really lucky, you may experience snow here. (Yes, we are serious about it). Discover nature in its pristine form and explore the sprawling pepper and coffee plantations here.

- 23rd: Saturday
- 24th: Sunday
- 25th: December

Kumarakom, Kerala: The best way to celebrate Christmas is to glide along the lovely backwaters of Vembanad Lake in Kumarakom. Despite its popularity on the travel map, Kumarakom's peaceful environs make it an extremely relaxing destination. You will be awe-struck with its serenity, especially when the sunset casts an orange glow on it.

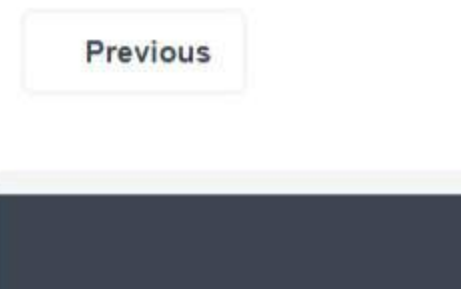
AUTHOR'S BIO: Ami Bhat is senior marketing professional, currently on a break to pursue full-time travel blogging. A travel enthusiast, who loves sports, photography and dancing with equal passion, Ami believes in planning a short escape for every long weekend that can come up through the year. And when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



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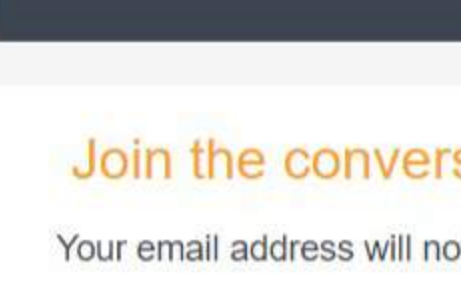
People burning oil lamps as religious ritual in Hindu temple, India



Canal houses of Amsterdam at dusk with vibrant reflections, Netherlands



Puja flowers offering for the Ganges river in Rishikesh, India



In Photos: Roopkund Trek, Uttarakhand

Located at an altitude of about 16,500 feet, Roopkund is one of the most popular treks in India for a plethora of reasons.

Lights and diyas, crackers and sparklers, feasts and sweets, and of course, card games with a bit of gambling thrown in are all a

There's something so finger-licking good about Indian food. From it's luring aroma to its bold, complex

Surrounded by forests and low hills, Rishikesh is an ancient pilgrimage centre, drawing both religious and secular visitors. Ashrams,



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