

Top 5 Monsoon Destinations in India

by Ami Bhat (Lonely Planet Author) Jul 2016



With the rain washing over its valleys and tea and coffee plantations, Wayanad turns into a green paradise
Image courtesy: Kerala Tourism Board

Monsoon is the kind of season that's a delight for the senses and the one time of year when the landscapes glistens. Indulge yourself and head for a little monsoon break.

Here are five destinations best experienced during the rains.

WAYANAD, KERALA

Home to plenty of paddy fields, Wayanad is great throughout the year but has a special charm during Monsoons. With the rain washing over its valleys and tea and coffee plantations, Wayanad turns into a green paradise that is sure to rejuvenate the senses. Don't be surprised if your first trip leads to many more here.

Things to do:

- Trek up to the Chembra Peak close to which lies a perennial heart-shaped lake.
- Spot rare and unique birds amongst the rocks and caves of Pakshipathalam.
- Bathe under the refreshing Soochipara, Meenmutty and Kanthapara Falls.
- Cross over to the eco-island of Kuruvadweep on Bamboo boats.
- Take a step back in time to the Neolithic age at the Edakkal Caves.

LONAVALA, MAHARASHTRA



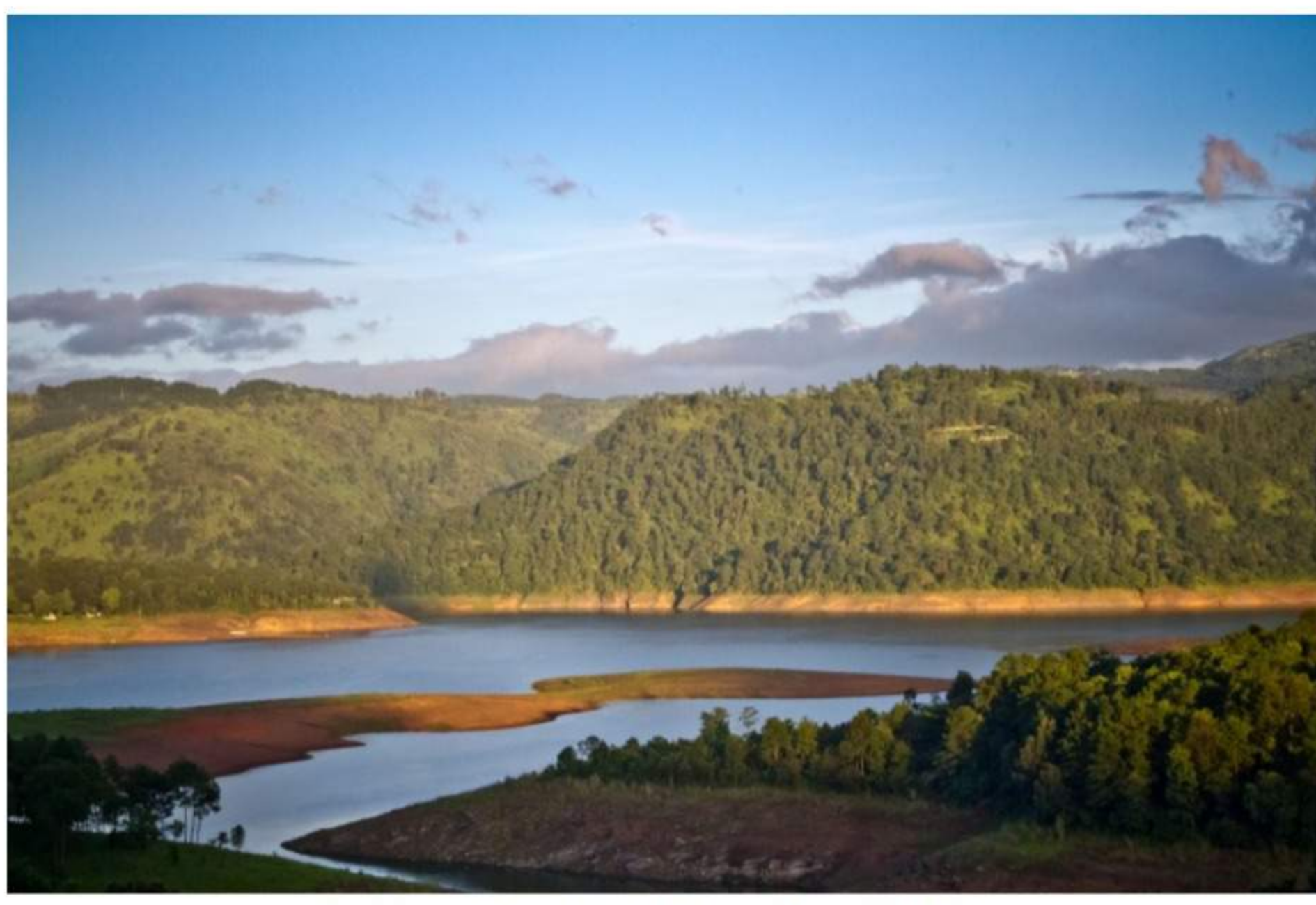
Lonavala, a charming hill station with an infinite expanse of greenery
Image courtesy: Flickr/solansgr/CC BY-SA 2.0

Lonavala is a charming hill station with an infinite expanse of greenery, broken only by white gushing waterfalls. A popular destination to enjoy the rain, the approach to this hill station from Mumbai and Pune is equally bewitching. Be it a road trip or a train journey, you are bound to encounter a few waterfalls along your path – an experience that you definitely want to lower your windows for.

Things to do:

- Enjoy a bath under the cascades of the famed Bhushi Dam.
- Trek up the Tiger's leap to get a gorgeous view of the green valleys of Lonavala.
- Do a fort tour with the various historic forts like the Lohagad, Visapur, Rajmachi fort or the Tikona fort.
- Explore the caves of Karla, Bhaja & Bedra known for their Buddhist history.
- Leap from the hills of Kamshet and paraglide your way down.

SHILLONG, MEGHALAYA



Bara Pani (Umam Lake) is why Shillong is called the 'Scotland of the East'
Image courtesy: Flickr/Masur Ashraf/CC BY-ND 2.0

You have not really experienced monsoons, if you have not visited one of the wettest places in the world. Shillong offers you that chance. Nestled amid the Khasi hills, this hill town offers its visitors the best of nature, including the unique living root bridges. And if you are an adventure seeker, Shillong has tons of activities for you – from caving and water rappelling to some great trekking and rock climbing.

Things to do:

- Try some water sports at the Umiam lake. This lake is the reason why Shillong is called the 'Scotland of the East'.
- Take a day or two to visit the wettest places on earth – Cherrapunji and Mawsynram (55- 65km from Shillong) and cross over the live root bridges.
- Discover the various stalagmites in the caves of Mawjymbuin. Go waterfall-hopping to Elephant falls, Sweet falls and Beadon falls.
- Experience a bird's-eye view of the whole city of Shillong at Shillong Peak. If you are lucky, you may spot the plains of Bangladesh and the majestic Himalayas from here.

GOA



Goa has a different charm during monsoon, (shown) Vagator Beach as seen from Fort Chapora
Image courtesy: Flickr/Vishal Jalan/CC BY 2.0

Goa may be a popular destination during another time of year but it has a different charm during monsoon. The beaches are amazing with their small rock pools and the air electric. One can even hire a bike and enjoy a drive on winding roads. That said, caution is advised since water levels go up, and roads can be slippery. It can be quite a unique experience.

Things to do:

- Spend a day or opt for a stay at the spice plantations in Goa.
- Time your visit for some more fun at the Bonderam Flag Festival or the fertility festival of Sao-Joao.
- Take a rain walk along Chapora Fort as the sea waves lash the shore below.
- Enjoy a drink at a beach shack, while you watch the rain fall on the beautiful beaches of Goa.

VALLEY OF FLOWERS, UTTARAKHAND



The Valley of Flowers, a sight to behold during monsoon
Image courtesy: Flickr/Alosh Benneti/CC BY 2.0

Part of the UNESCO biosphere, the Valley of Flowers in Uttarakhand is a unique destination and a sight to behold during monsoon. Flowers of myriad colours and shapes and beautiful snow clad mountains enhance the landscape. If you're feeling adventurous, the Valley of Flowers is an arduous but pleasurable 16km high trek starting from Govindghat.

Things to do:

- Visit the Lakshman temple and Hemkund Sahib.
- Take a cultural tour of the quaint town of Mana and grab a cuppa at the last coffee shop at the border of India and Tibet.
- Keep your camera close for there are plenty of beautiful frames here.
- Spot rare wildlife – Red Fox, bears and blue sheep – along the way.

All opinions mentioned in the article are the author's own.

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 blog. More on: <http://www.thrillingtravel.in/>



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