

Best places to wake up on the first day of 2017

by Ami Bhat (Lonely Planet Author) Dec 2016



Image courtesy: Pallavi Pasricha

This year do something different – skip Goa, the big cities, the lavish parties – and instead begin the first day of the year on a peaceful and scenic note. If you want to end the year quietly and wake up to a beautiful fresh start on the first day of 2017, take a look at these places.

Shillong

A New Year in Shillong means that you can literally float in the abode of clouds – Meghalaya. Explore the destination for its crystal clear Umiam Lake, a reason that gets it a sobriquet of being the “Scotland of the East.” Try some waterfall hopping with Sweet falls and Elephant falls or just spend the last day of the year golfing at the Shilling Golf Course. Don’t miss the breathtaking view of the entire town of Shillong from the Shillong Peak.

Image courtesy: Karnataka Tourism

Gokarna

With its stunning rocky beaches and a calm spiritual atmosphere, Gokarna is a great destination to bring in the New Year. Spend your last evening of 2016 watching the warm golden glow of sunset on the rocky Kudle and Om beaches, lie on the sandy shores beneath a clear star-studded night sky and wake up for a lovely beach trek through the hills of Gokarna. Remember to sample the amazing food at the fusion cafes here. If a daily yoga routine is one of your New Year resolutions, then there is no better place to start your first dawn of 2017 than the gorgeous beaches of Gokarna.

Image courtesy: Aayush Gajhiye via See.Click.Share.Repeat

Mcleodganj

If mountains are more your thing than beaches, then Mcleodganj in Himachal Pradesh is a perfect choice. The soothing atmosphere of this hill station with its Tibetan residents, the snow-capped Himalayas that surround it and the charming little cafes makes this an ideal destination to usher in 2017. An ideal thing to do on New Year’s is to pack a picnic basket and head to the scenic Dal Lake, while visiting the various monasteries and stupas along the way.

Image courtesy: Rajasthan Tourism Board

Pushkar

A night around a bonfire lit amid the sand dunes of Pushkar with a spectacular view of the sun rising far out in the dusty horizon is what you can expect in this destination. Add to this, the colorful Rajasthani dances, traditions and the delicious local cuisine that makes the party even more vibrant. Besides the desert experience, you can opt for a lovely trek to the Ratnagiri hill, visit the only Brahma temple in the town or discover the vibrant sounds and sights around the Pushkar bazaar and lake.

Image courtesy: Pallavi Pasricha

Kovalam

Usher in your year with a little sand and surf on the beaches of Kovalam. Top up your experience with an authentic Kerala ayurveda massage on one of those gorgeous resorts on the beach. Adding more flavours literally, is the yummy local Kerala cuisine – from its fish curries to steaming appams and idiyappams. Of course a cruise on the backwaters is a great way to begin the New Year.

Scuba diver and School of French Grunts (Haemulon flavolineatum) fish - Cozumel, Mexico

Lakshadweep

Clear blue skies and equally clear water with its unspoiled beaches and diverse marine life – Lakshadweep is a destination that escapes most people. With its pristine landscape and quiet resort stays, this is an ideal place to start something different and new. Indulge in scuba diving or snorkeling to discover the colorful world underneath, pump up some adrenaline with skiing and kayaking or just experience the sea mist with some speed boating.

Musician, Jaipur, India

Image courtesy: Rajasthan Tourism Board

Jaipur

Experience how contemporary blends in with tradition and culture at the New Year’s celebrations held at the heritage resorts and hotel in Jaipur. Indulge in some Rajasthani folk performances while you sample the rich local food. If you are history buff, Jaipur with its rich monuments, forts and palaces is just the place that you need, to begin your first day of the year.

Image courtesy: Gujarat Tourism Board

Rann of Kutch

Experience the shimmering white salt lands of the Rann of Kutch – that shine as the moon reflects on it. Enjoy the annual Rann Utsav that treats you to the best of Gujarati culture, cuisine and camp out in the special tents set up to enjoy the white sands of Kutch. Try out some dirt biking or take a day trip to the gorgeous Mandvi beach in Kutch.

Image courtesy: Flickr/Paul Hamilton/CC BY-SA 2.0

Mussoorie

Discover the charming British traces in this town with its peanut butter hub in Landour, the quaint wooden cottages with cute fireplaces and the small churches. At the same time, you can also, witness the Happy Valley of the Tibetans with its lovely monastery and little cafes. Don’t miss out on the refreshing nature walks that this hill station offers you.

Image courtesy: Lonely Planet/Nishai Lama

Indore

Yet another destination that blends in typical cityscape attractions with heritage ones, Indore makes for a great option to spend your New Year holidays. Explore the ancient palaces of the Holkars while you treat yourself to the mouthwatering delicacies and street food of the Sarafa market. Of course, there is no way you can leave without visiting the architectural marvel of the glass temple or the Kanch Mandir here. Take your pick from a range of day trips to some gorgeous nature spots on the last day and then usher in a fresh chapter in the New Year.

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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