



Haryana & Punjab

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Ghazal (p208)
- ➔ Punjab Grill (p208)
- ➔ Thai Chi (p218)
- ➔ Brothers' Dhaba (p217)
- ➔ Crystal Restaurant (p218)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Grand Hotel (p216)
- ➔ Hotel Aquamarine (p207)
- ➔ Mrs Bhandari's Guest House (p216)
- ➔ Hotel Satyadeep (p205)
- ➔ Baradari Palace (p223)

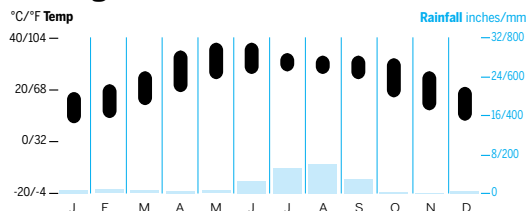
Why Go?

Northwest of Delhi, the states of Haryana and Punjab were carved from the Indian half of Punjab in the aftermath of Partition. Since then, Punjab has gone from strength to strength as the homeland of India's Sikh community, while Haryana has emerged as a dynamic hub for business and industry. Studded with gleaming gurdwaras (Sikh temples) – including the famous Golden Temple at Amritsar – Punjab has become an essential stop on the traveller circuit. Haryana is more of a touristic mystery, best known for its modernist capital, Chandigarh, brainchild of Swiss architect Le Corbusier. The hinterland around these two hubs is dotted with fascinating, rarely visited towns that tell a story of battling empires and playboy maharajas.

Punjab and Haryana are united by their love of food. This is the region that gave the world tandoori chicken, *tadka dal* (fried yellow lentils) and butter chicken, the prototype for chicken tikka masala.

When to Go

Chandigarh



Mar Three days of Sikh celebrations for Holla Mohalla at Anandpur Sahib.

April Punjab's largest festival, Baisakhi, marks the Sikh New Year and the founding of the Khalsa.

Dec Diwali brings fireworks fun to cities across the region.

Food

Punjab is the home of nutty, long-grain basmati rice and the myriad delights to emerge from the tandoor (clay oven). Must-try Punjabi dishes include *kulcha* (fried bread), *keema naan* (flat-bread stuffed with mince), *dhal makhani* (black lentils and red kidney beans with cream and butter), tandoori chicken, butter chicken and, in winter, Amritsari fried fish.

DON'T MISS

Circumambulate the serene **Golden Temple** in Amritsar and join the crowds of devotees in the *langar* (refectory) – a humbling introduction to the Sikh principles of equality and hospitality.

Top State Festivals

- ➔ **Kila Raipur Sports Festival** (Rural Olympics; ☺ Feb; Kila Raipur, p220, near Ludhiana) Three days of bullock-cart races, kabaddi, strongman contests, folk dancing and more.
- ➔ **Surajkund Crafts Mela** (☺ 1-15 Feb; Surajkund, p212) Visiting artisans demonstrate and sell colourful handicrafts, with accompanying cultural performances.
- ➔ **Holla Mohalla** (☺ Mar; Anandpur Sahib, p221) Sikhs celebrate the foundation of the Khalsa (Sikh brotherhood) with martial-arts demonstrations and battle re-enactments.
- ➔ **Baisakhi** (☺ Apr 13-14; statewide) Sikhs head to gurdwaras to celebrate the Sikh New Year.
- ➔ **Gita Jayanti** (☺ Nov/Dec; Kurukshetra, p211) One week of cultural events for the anniversary of the Bhagavad Gita.
- ➔ **Pinjore Heritage Festival** (☺ Dec; Pinjore Gardens, near Chandigarh, p210) Three-day cultural festival with music and dance performances, handicrafts and food stalls.
- ➔ **Harballabh Sangeet Sammelan** (☺ late Dec; Jalandhar, p220) The 130-year-old music festival showcasing Indian classical music; four days.

MAIN POINTS OF ENTRY

Most visitors fly into Chandigarh International Airport or Sri Guru Ram Dass Jee International Airport in Amritsar.

Fast Facts

- ➔ **Population:** 25.4 million (Haryana), 27.7 million (Punjab)
- ➔ **Area:** 44,212 sq km (Haryana), 50,362 sq km (Punjab)
- ➔ **Capital:** Chandigarh
- ➔ **Main languages:** Hindi (Haryana), Punjabi (Punjab)
- ➔ **Sleeping prices:** \$ below ₹1000, \$\$ ₹1000 to ₹5000, \$\$\$ above ₹5000

Top Tip

Make time to detour to some of Punjab's smaller towns: Kurukshetra for Hindu mythology, Anandpur Sahib for Sikh history, or Patiala and Kapurthala for fading memories of the princely states.

Resources

- ➔ **Punjab Tourism** (www.punjabtourism.gov.in)
- ➔ **Haryana Tourism** (www.haryanatourism.gov.in)
- ➔ **Haryana Online** (www.haryana-online.com)
- ➔ **Chandigarh Tourism** (www.chandigarhtourism.gov.in)
- ➔ **CITCO** (www.citcochandigarh.gov.in)
- ➔ **Chandigarh Administration** (www.chandigarh.nic.in)