



Jaffna & the North

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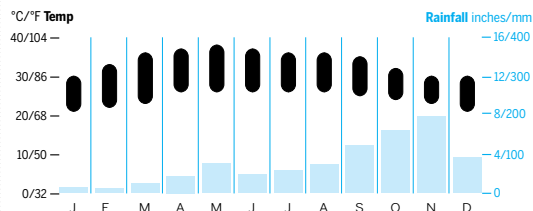
Why Go?

With towering, rainbow Hindu temples, sari-clad women on bicycles and a spectacular coastline fringed with palmyra and coconut palms, the North is a different world. Here the climate is arid for most of the year and the fields sun-baked. The light is stronger: surreal and white-hot on salt flats in the Vanni, bright and lucid on coral islands and northern beaches, and soft and speckled in Jaffna's leafy suburbs and its battle-scarred centre.

And, of course, there are the cultural differences. From the language to the cuisine to religion, Tamil culture has its own rhythms, and people here are proud of their heritage. Inevitably, given that this region was a war zone until very recently, there's still a noticeable military presence. But the ambience is far more relaxed than you'd expect, as locals focus on healing, rebuilding and reviving the rich traditions of northern life.

When to Go

Jaffna



Feb The best month to view greater flamingos, present in their hundreds in Mannar Island.

Jun–Jul High season sees sunshine, moderate heat and delicious mangoes.

Jul–Aug Jaffna's extraordinary 25-day Nallur festival has parades, ice cream and ritual self-mutilation.

