



# Jaffna & the North

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## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Mangos (p278)
- ➔ Jaffna Heritage Hotel (p278)
- ➔ Hotel Rolex (p278)
- ➔ Green Grass (p278)

## Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Jetwing Jaffna Hotel (p278)
- ➔ Jaffna Heritage Hotel (p278)
- ➔ Sarras Guest House (p277)
- ➔ Shell Coast Resort (p292)

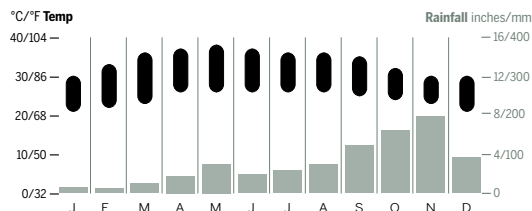
## Why Go?

With towering, rainbow-coloured 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 busy centre. Look for the shimmer of colours from the wild peacocks that seem to be everywhere.

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 the region's recent history, there's still a noticeable military presence. But the ambience is relaxed as locals focus on building for the future and reviving the rich traditions of northern life.

## When to Go

### Jaffna



**Feb** The best month to view greater flamingos, present in their hundreds on 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.



## Jaffna & the North Highlights

**1 Jaffna's Islands** (p286)  
Marvelling at the spectacular seascapes and surreal light while exploring offshore treasures such as Nainativu.

**2 War Memorials** (p287)  
Understanding the war's destruction of communities at sites like the Sea Tiger Shipyard.

**3 Mannar Island** (p290)  
Discovering ancient baobab trees, a historic fort, remote bays and a view almost to India.

**4 Scenic Rides** (p283)  
Riding along spectacular coastal roads of the Jaffna.

**5 Northeast Shore** (p284)  
Finding your own

perfect palm-fringed ribbon of sand, such as isolated Manalkadu Beach.

**6 Jaffna** (p272)  
Slipping into a trance during puja (prayers) at Nallur Kandaswamy Kovil, before appreciating the city's rebirth among the old walls of Jaffna Fort.