

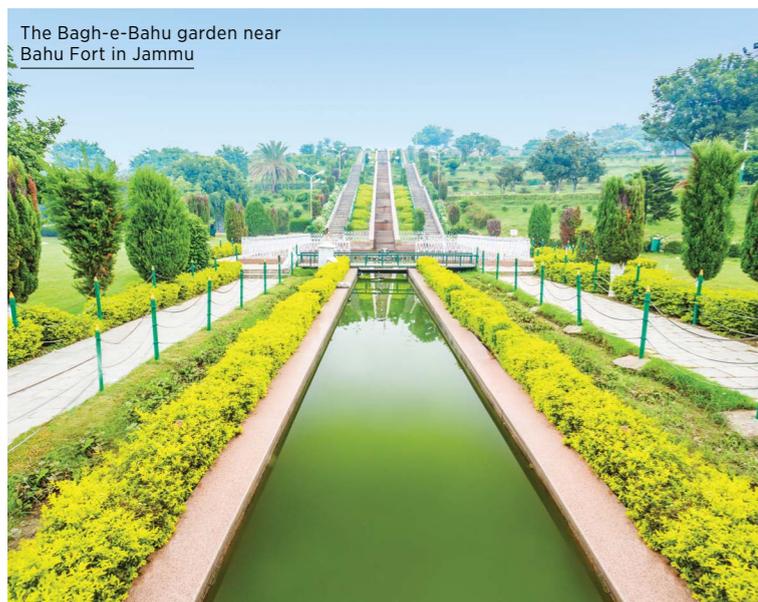
The stunning Dal Lake in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu & Kashmir



# BEAT THE SUMMER HEAT

EVER WISHED TO TAKE OFF TO ONE OF THOSE 'DO NOTHING' HOLIDAY DESTINATIONS? WELL, SUMMER VACATIONS ARE DUE AND WE HAVE LINED UP MANY SUCH EXCITING GETAWAYS. WHILE SPICEJET FLIES TO SOME OF THEM, OTHERS ARE EASILY ACCESSIBLE FROM AIRPORTS SERVICED BY THE AIRLINE. ENJOY! **BY ANITA RAO-KASHI AND BINDU GOPAL RAO**

The Bagh-e-Bahu garden near Bahu Fort in Jammu



Dharamshala is scenic and beautiful through the year



Strolling on the Ridge is a favourite activity for many visitors to Shimla

## SRINAGAR (JAMMU & KASHMIR)

The summer capital of Jammu & Kashmir, Srinagar couldn't have had a better setting: it sits in the picturesque Kashmir valley on the banks of the beautiful river Jhelum and encompasses some sublime lakes such as Dal and Anchar and is surrounded by the Himalayas on all sides. If there ever was a place fit to be described as picture-postcard, Srinagar would fit it perfectly as it is filled with gardens, waterfronts and lakes with houseboats, hills and valleys and snow-capped mountains. Though Srinagar is quite densely populated, it is easy to have a quiet time, especially with long houseboat rides on the lakes at sunrise and sunset. It is also an easy place to walk around and savour the abundant natural beauty. Not to be missed are the Mughal Gardens with lush green lawns, fountains and pretty flower beds. For the restless, there's much to do here including heading out on short or long excursions, but just aimlessly wandering around to soak up the weather and the city's beauty is perfectly acceptable too.

SpiceJet flies to Srinagar. Log on to [www.spicejet.com](http://www.spicejet.com) for flight details

## JAMMU (JAMMU & KASHMIR)

Located in the Shivalik hills at an altitude of over 1000 ft, Jammu is the winter capital of the state of Jammu & Kashmir. It is situated rather prettily on the banks of the river Tawi. Jammu is also known for the numerous temples that dot the cityscape and it is a good idea to leisurely wander around and visit as many or as few depending on your interest. For a more relaxed time, head to Bahu Fort and the sprawling gardens around it. If you are looking for a more leisurely time amidst nature, head behind the fort to the city forest which overlooks the river and makes for a lovely stroll. Back in the city, it is a good idea to get immersed in Jammu's unique bustle and catch a slice of local life as well in its various bazaars such as Hari Market, Vir Marg and Raghunath Bazaar.

SpiceJet flies to Jammu. Log on to [www.spicejet.com](http://www.spicejet.com) for flight details

## DHARAMSHALA (HIMACHAL PRADESH)

Perched in Kangra Valley under the shadow of the towering Dhauladhar mountains in Himachal Pradesh, Dharamshala is a unique place. Not only is it scenic and beautiful through the

year, with cedar forests and the looming Himalayas always in the background, it is also where the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in Exile are located. Together with the adjacent McLeod Ganj, Dharamshala is the ideal summer getaway and you can choose to set whatever pace you want. Though Dharamshala is the starting point for many treks such as Toral, Triund, Bleni and Bhingasutri, it is also perfectly fine to just lounge around, watching the beautiful mountains and forests, soaking up fresh air and savouring the sound of birds. If you must stir, then opt for leisurely strolls to Bhagsu waterfall about 3 km away or to Guna temple. Scores of yoga outfits offer a whole spectrum of classes starting from Iyengar and Ashtanga to Hatha and Kundalini. The more creatively inclined could also try cooking and Thangka painting classes.

SpiceJet flies to Dharamshala. Log on to [www.spicejet.com](http://www.spicejet.com) for flight details

## SHIMLA (HIMACHAL PRADESH)

The British influence on the town is unmissable and you must take time to admire the architecture dating back to the colonial era that manifests itself in buildings built in the Neo Gothic and Tudorbethan styles. Attractions here include Christ Church, Jakhoo Temple, Mall Road and the Ridge. Hop on to the famed Kalka-Shimla train, which is on the UNESCO World Heritage list and check out the Indian connection to this British construction at the Baba Balkuram museum. The air in the hills is pure, so make the most of it by strolling around on the local meandering roads.

SpiceJet flies to Chandigarh, 115 km away. Log on to [www.spicejet.com](http://www.spicejet.com) for flight details

Mussoorie is often called the Queen of Hill Stations

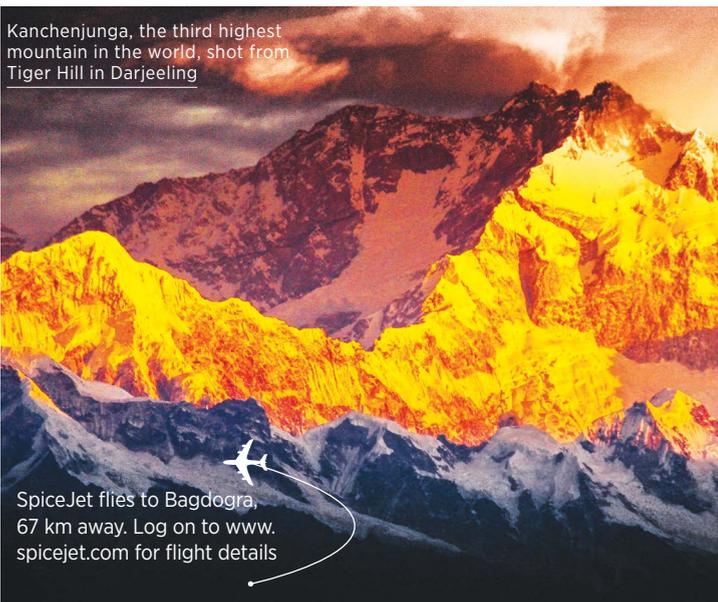


SpiceJet flies to Dehradun, 59 km away. Log on to [www.spicejet.com](http://www.spicejet.com) for flight details

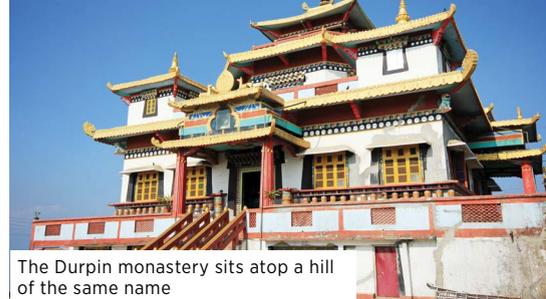
#### ↑ MUSSOORIE (UTTARAKHAND)

A charming hill station, Mussoorie is close to 6,600 feet above sea level and is a fascinating place thanks to its varied flora and fauna. When you are here, take a gingerly stroll on the famed Camel's Back Road that is a rocky outcrop shaped like – as its name suggests, a camel's hump. Also stop to admire the flowers and plants in Company Garden as well as take a trip to Happy Valley, home to India's first Tibetan temple. Undertake an easy hike to Lal Tibba and soak in the majestic views of the Himalayas. When you are here, do not miss heading to Landour, a cantonment town to the north of Mussoorie, where you can see the Nag Tibba range of the Himalayas. Simply walk among the deodar, cedar, Himalayan oak, blue pine and Himalayan maple trees and also spot the Garhwal Himalayan range. With over 350 species of birdlife recorded, this is an avian lover's paradise. The Kempton Falls, Soham Heritage & Art Centre and Christ Church are some places worth visiting.

Kanchenjunga, the third highest mountain in the world, shot from Tiger Hill in Darjeeling



SpiceJet flies to Bagdogra, 67 km away. Log on to [www.spicejet.com](http://www.spicejet.com) for flight details



The Durpin monastery sits atop a hill of the same name

#### ↑ KALIMPONG (WEST BENGAL)

Lesser known than Darjeeling, Kalimpong is ideal for those looking for a quiet holiday away from the hordes. It sits on a ridge at an altitude of over 4,000 ft overlooking the gushing Teesta river. It is a very picturesque hill town with narrow winding roads that go up and down the hillsides, offering fabulous views of the valleys surrounding it and the Himalayan peaks in the distance. Evidently, it is an idyllic place with a number of parks, a variety of orchids, a cactus park and picnic destinations including Deolo Hill which offers stunning panoramic views. If you are looking for a dose of culture, hire a taxi and do a round of the numerous Buddhist monasteries that dot the surrounding areas such as Zong Dhok Palri Phodang located on top of Durpin Hill which houses some rare scriptures.

SpiceJet flies to Bagdogra, 75 km away. Log on to [www.spicejet.com](http://www.spicejet.com) for flight details

#### ← DARJEELING (WEST BENGAL)

Among the oldest summer getaways in the country going back to the British days, Darjeeling is sometimes overrun with crowds, but there's still enough charm to make it a lovely summer getaway. It has a lot going for it, such as the fabulous views of the Himalayas with Kanchenjunga. But it is also surrounded by beautiful hills, valleys and tea plantations which are ideal for a do-nothing holiday. If you must stir, then head out to viewpoints such as Tiger Hill and Observatory Hill for panoramic views, or stroll in the many parks and gardens that dot the place. It is also a good idea to just walk around aimlessly along the undulating roads and soak up the natural beauty as well as for a taste of the town's colonial history, with colonial style bungalows perched on the hillside interspersed with views of hills and valleys. For a bird's eye view of the area, get on the cable car for an aerial ride.

## COVER STORY DESTINATIONS



Shillong is blessed with three beautiful waterfalls

### ↑ SHILLONG (MEGHALAYA)

There are many leisurely activities you can undertake in this beautiful hill station of the north-east. Stroll amongst the abundance of plants and flowers in Lady Hydari Park, located in the heart of Shillong. You can also walk gingerly in the garden adjoining Ward's Lake which also has boating facilities. If it is waterfalls you seek, there are three of them in Shillong.

SpiceJet flies to Guwahati, 95 km away. Log on to [www.spicejet.com](http://www.spicejet.com) for details

### ↓ MAHABALESHWAR

(MAHARASHTRA)

Sitting at nearly 4,500 ft in the Sahyadri range, Mahabaleshwar is a beautiful hill station with a pleasant climate through the year. It is like a little plateau amidst the hill range with fabulous lookout points offering stunning views of the hills and valleys around and you can spend hours just walking around or lounging. It is also the source for five rivers including the Krishna. At the centre of the town is a quaint bazaar and pedestrian-only area which makes for a fabulous walk-through.

SpiceJet flies to Pune, 120 km away. Log on to [www.spicejet.com](http://www.spicejet.com) for flight details



The popular Elephant's Head Point in Mahabaleshwar



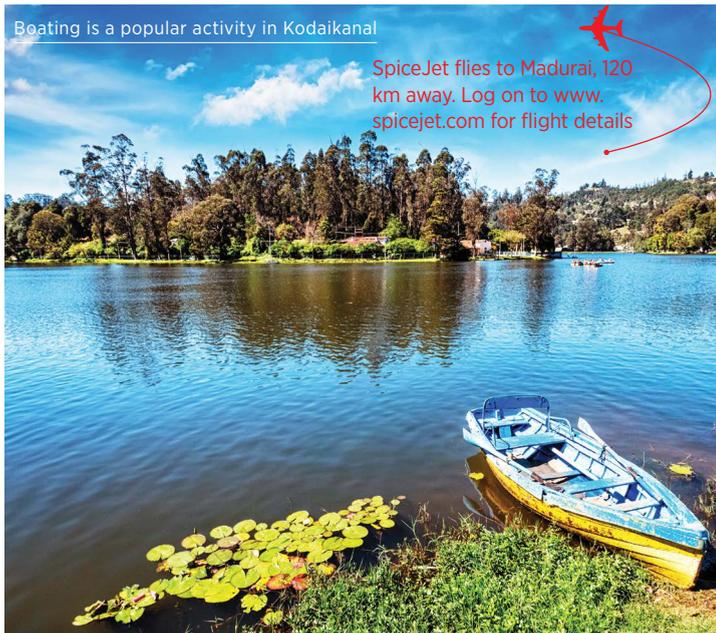
Goa has among the most beautiful beaches among all Indian states

### ↑ GOA (GOA)

Goa does not have any hill stations but it sure has some of the most attractive beaches in this part of the world. The waters are enough for many travellers to forget the summer heat. An eternal favourite holiday destination, this summer go off the beaten track and explore the natural vistas of this small state. For starters, explore the Portuguese connect and take a walk in Fontainhas, the Latin quarter of Panjim and you will not stop admiring the colourful homes, ancient architecture as well as the traditional living style that is still in vogue here. To come up close with the biodiversity of the state, head to its relatively unknown mangrove habitat, home to varied birds and wildlife.

SpiceJet flies to Goa. Log on to [www.spicejet.com](http://www.spicejet.com) for flight details

Boating is a popular activity in Kodaikanal



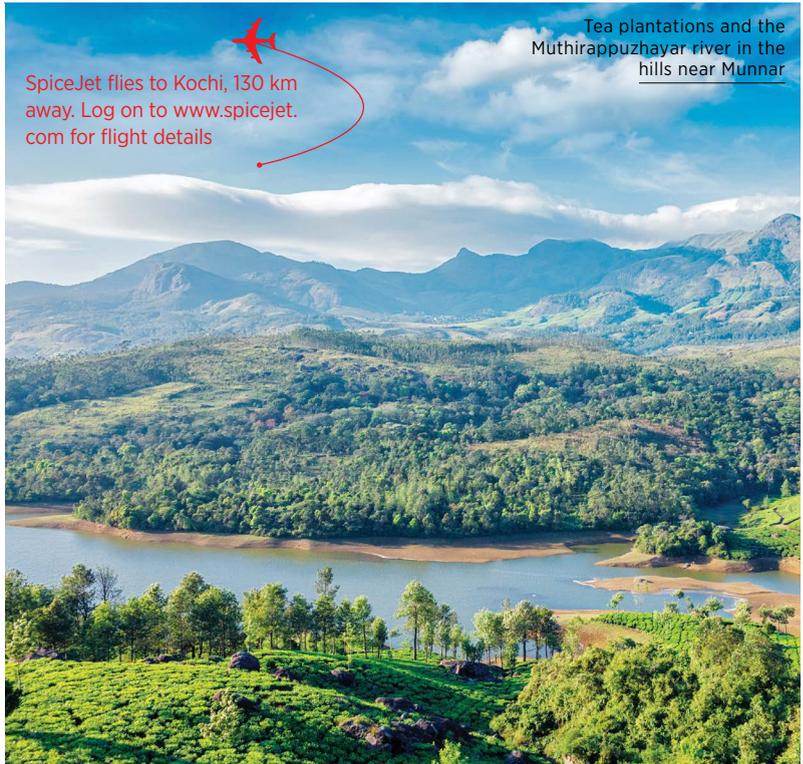
SpiceJet flies to Madurai, 120 km away. Log on to [www.spicejet.com](http://www.spicejet.com) for flight details

### ← KODAIKANAL (TAMIL NADU)

Kodaikanal means the gift of the forest in Tamil. The hill town is located between the Parappar and Gundar Valleys and grasslands and meadows cover the hills. Eucalyptus trees, shola forests, large rocks and cascading streams and gardens make this a delight for the nature lover. Simply walk around and it is impossible to miss the majestic cypress, eucalyptus and acacia trees. Flowering trees like rhododendron and magnolia as well as pear trees are also commonly seen. Multi-hued, large dahlias are must-see at Bryant Park and the town is a splash of colour courtesy the profusion of flowers. If you are here in autumn, the town is awash in pink with cherry blossoms. The famed Kurunji flower that blooms once in 12 years can also be seen in Kodaikanal. Stop by at the Pine forest, a famous film shooting spot; Guna Caves and Pillar Rock Viewpoint as well as indulge in a spot of boating at Kodaikanal Lake.

→ **MUNNAR (KERALA)**

Set amidst rolling hillsides interspersed with carpets of emerald green tea plantations and breathtaking scenery, Munnar is the perfect summer getaway. Even though hordes descend on the area, there are plenty of nooks and corners to ensure a serene holiday. Possibly the best way to get the most of Munnar is to sit back and let the place work its magic or take walks and soak up the atmosphere. If sitting back gets monotonous, then head to Echo Point, about 15 km away, to a beautiful lake surrounded by hills where even the slightest sound is echoed many times, or go to Top Station, about 35 km, where sweeping vistas of hills and valleys, hidden by shifting curtains of clouds and mist, make for fabulous views. For the restless, there's a range of sights and activities to pick from, such as Devikulam lake, a lovely body of water where Sita is believed to have taken a dip; beautiful waterfalls; and the remote Kolukkumalai, the highest tea plantation in the country.



SpiceJet flies to Kochi, 130 km away. Log on to [www.spicejet.com](http://www.spicejet.com) for flight details

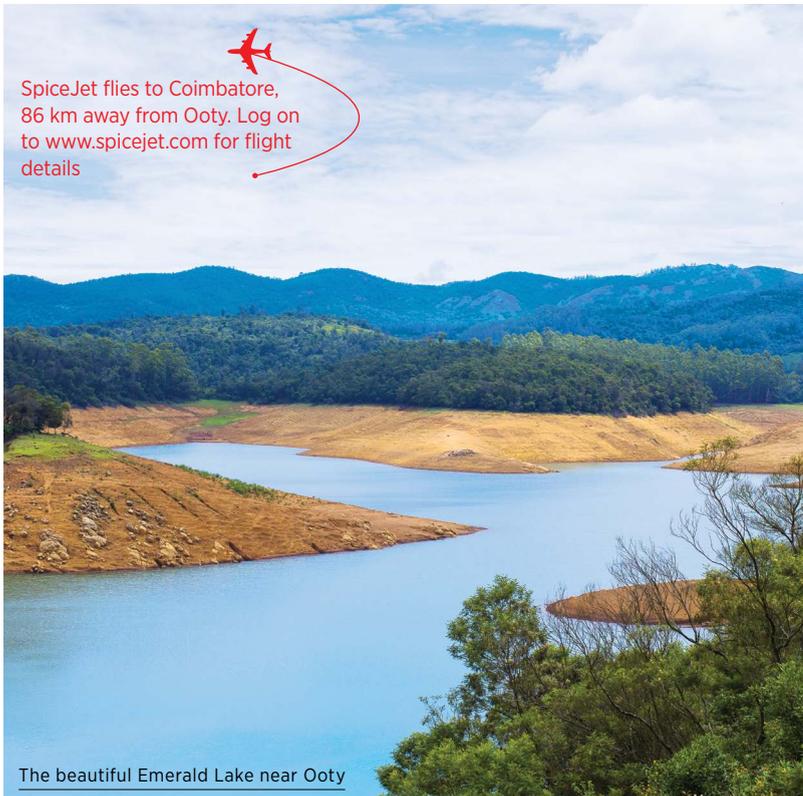
Tea plantations and the Muthirappuzhayar river in the hills near Munnar



SpiceJet flies to Coimbatore, 86 km away from Ooty. Log on to [www.spicejet.com](http://www.spicejet.com) for flight details

← **OOTY AND COONOR (TAMIL NADU)**

The Nilgiri mountains are home to the wonderful hill stations of Ooty and Coonor and being 6,600 feet above sea level, the cool climes are a welcome relief from the scorching summer. Being blessed with several natural vistas, a holiday here is your passport to 2,700 plus species of flowering plants and 160 plus species of fern. Grasslands and shrublands have today made way for rows and rows of tea plantations. In Ooty there are several waterfalls that make for scenic sights with the Kolakambai Fall being the highest at a height of 400 feet. The highest point in the Nilgiris is the Doddabetta Peak and you can enjoy several trekking trails here as well. In Ooty do make time to see the Ooty Lake, Botanical Gardens and the Pine Forest. At a distance of 18 km from Ooty is Coonor, known for its wild flowers and birds. We suggest you take the Nilgiri Mountain Railway (Toy Train) to reach Coonor. Sim's Park, Lamb's Rock, Dolphin's Nose and Law's Falls are popular places to visit in Coonor.



The beautiful Emerald Lake near Ooty

SHUTTERSTOCK