

Festivals of India - March 2011

Sheetala Ashtami

When: 08 March 2011

Where: Jaipur, Rajasthan



The Sheetala Ashtami is best celebrated in the Chakshu region of Jaipur. Chakshu is like a small hamlet located near Jaipur. The festival is associated with a number of religious beliefs. According to the belief, celebration of this festival would save the people from epidemics. In

fact, by celebrating the festival, the local people pay respect to the goddess of small pox. The local people of Chakshu have a firm belief that their respect for the goddess will make them immune towards this deadly disease. The red stone represents the deity of Sheetala Ashtami.

During the festival, a number of musical events are organized. This acts as a platform to display the talents of the local people. Tourists visiting the festival of Sheetala Ashtami in Rajasthan have a gala time. The various events and rituals of this festival give them a close look of the rich culture and tradition of the Rajasthan. They also get the opportunity to buy a number of exquisite items that are displayed in the nearby market.

Uthralikkavu Pooram Festival

When: 01 March, 2011

Where: Kerala

Sree Ruthira Mahakaalikavu Temple is dedicated to goddess Kali. The annual festival here is the most famous event in the region and is called the Uthralikavu Pooram. The eight day celebration is highlighted by elephant processions by day and night. The concluding day of the festival is celebrated as Pooram day, when twenty one elephants in traditional caparisons line up in the maidan (grounds) with mahouts sitting atop them holding colourful parasols and swaying white tufts and peacock feather fans.



Traditional musical ensembles like Panchavadyam, Pandimelam etc. add rhythm to this enchanting spectacle. The all night Pooram is conducted in the glow of the traditional temple torches called Theevatti, which heightens its ethereal aura. The cultural fare during the festival includes temple and folk art performances.

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Festival

When: 19 March 2011

Where: Jaipur, Rajasthan

The Elephant Festival is a unique event held annually in Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan. Groomed to perfection, glittering in gold, row upon row of elephants catwalk before an enthralled audience. The elephants move gracefully in procession, run races, play the regal game of polo, and finally participate in the spring festival of Holi. It is festival time for the elephants.

The festival begins with a procession of elephants, camels and horses, followed by lively folk dancers. Elephant races, elephant-polo matches and a most interesting tug of war between elephants and men, are all part of this spectacular event.



SUGGESTED *North India* **ITINERARY**



Day 1 – Fly to Delhi

Day 2: Delhi - Arrive and transfer to hotel

Day 3: Delhi – Tour of Old & New Delhi

Day 4: Delhi/Agra – Morning train to Agra. Tour of Agra Fort & sunset visit to Taj Mahal

Day 5: Agra/Jaipur– Sunrise visit to Taj Mahal. Drive to Jaipur (5 hours) via Fatehpur Sikri and a stop for lunch en route

Day 6: Jaipur– Full day tour of Walled Pink City Jaipur, Observatory and City Palace

Day 7: Half day city tour. Drive to Delhi and transfer to international airport