



# UTTAR PRADESH

Changing Perspectives



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# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>2 The state of Uttar Pradesh.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>3 The Circuits.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>4 Main Attractions.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>5 FICCI-MRSS India 12 point Roadmap for growth .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>of Inbound Tourism in Uttar Pradesh</b>	
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>55</b>





## **Executive Summary**

## Executive Summary



The Indian tourism and hospitality industry has emerged as one of the key drivers of growth among the services sector in India. It provides several socio economic benefits and thus holds a strategic importance in the Indian economy. Considering the rich cultural and historical heritage, variety in ecology, terrains and places of natural beauty spread across the country, this sector is a huge crowd puller and has witnessed a steady growth in the past decade. A large employment generator, the travel and tourism industry is a big source of foreign exchange generation for the country.

Uttar Pradesh, the heartland of India, dominates the nation in culture, religion, language and politics. Situated in the vast steamy plain of the Ganges, it boasts of a history that's very much the history of India, and its temples and monuments – Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim – are among the most impressive in the country. The state, adjoining Delhi has always been close to India's power centre. Agra, once the Mughal capital is still the biggest draw among the visitors, both foreign and domestic. Lucknow once a part of the Kingdom of Awadh, is the capital city of Uttar Pradesh.

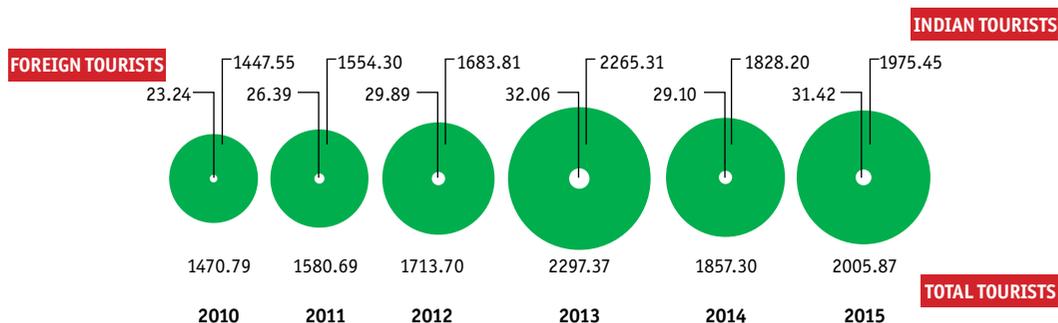
'The Religious Capital of India', Varanasi in eastern UP is frequented by pilgrims from various parts of the world. It lies on the banks of the river Ganges, which adds magic to the atmosphere. It is believed death transports the soul to final liberation here.

### In-bound tourism

It is notable that Uttar Pradesh has witnessed far more businesses specializing in domestic and in-bound tourism in 2015. This surely is a sign of maturation of the industry, which can continue only with the support of state and national government. The positive trends of the last few years must surely flourish - the statistics speak for itself. Uttar Pradesh is one of India's most iconic states which attract 226 million domestic and just over 2 million international visitors out of 1.1 billion domestic and nearly 7 million international tourists visiting India.



The number of domestic and foreign tourists who visited important tourist places in Uttar Pradesh. (in lacs)



The above figures well depict that there has been a 35% growth in Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTA) in Uttar Pradesh from 2010 to 2015 and the Domestic Tourist Arrivals has gone up by 36% for the same period. The largest percentage of travelers from overseas come from the USA and UK, with Canada, Malaysia, Japan, France, Germany and Russia also heavily represented. Overall, there is undoubtedly an accelerating understanding of what tourists in India want.

## Role of the State Government in promoting tourism in UP

The state government of Uttar Pradesh has made serious efforts to promote tourism in the state because of its tremendous potential to increase in-flow of tourists, both domestic and foreign. Thus the local government has put tremendous endeavor for promoting tourism industry by way of adding new tourist circuits and destination keeping in mind the existence of rich cultural heritage, it's ethnic background and unexplored potential. The few initiatives have been enumerated below to highlight the state governments on- going focus;

- **The promotion and branding of the Agra-Varanasi-Lucknow Heritage Arc**

The promotion and branding of the Agra-Varanasi-Lucknow Heritage Arc played an important role in boosting the tourist traffic. There has been a sudden increase in the tourist flow after these circuits were introduced. Tourist facilities have been spruced up, and heritage walks have also been started in these three cities recently.

- **Special attention to promoting Heritage and Eco-Tourism for foreign tourists**

The government has given special attention in promoting Heritage and Eco-Tourism for foreign tourists. These have witnessed increased tourist arrivals in the form of weekend getaways.



- **Tourist facilities have been spruced up, and heritage walks have also been started in Agra-Varanasi-Lucknow in the last couple of years. Heritage walk in Kaiserbagh to come up soon.**

This has catered to a wide range of tourists, who would want to spend some time at leisure. Heritage walks has been welcomed by the elderly travelers and also foreigners who are in search of a bit of history.

- **Revival plans for the long lost Awadhi cuisine**

This revival plan would help develop a Food Trail. It is expected to be a hit within travelers looking for long lost authentic Awadhi cuisine.

- **Organising an annual fest of 10-days, the Taj Mahotsav**

This 10 days long carnival has provided a platform that gives information on India's rich arts, crafts, cultures, cuisine, dance and music. It has turned out to be a major attraction among tourists over the years.

- **Kushinagar Road Infrastructure for Pro-poor tourism development**

Implementation of the proposed World Bank aided \$300 million tourism projects of Buddhist Circuit and Agra-Braj corridor under pro-poor tourism development programme. The project has aimed to connect the poor to benefit them under tourism project. Issues like strengthening of main road and other link roads leading to Sarnath, beautification of ghats along Ganga and creation of light and sound show at Assi Ghat. The project is expected to be over by middle of 2016.

- **Launch of e-books on Uttar Pradesh**

E-governance is poised to take a big leap in Uttar Pradesh with the state lining up a slew of initiatives to empower citizens in line with the 'Digital India' programme. It is putting in place a system which would deliver vital services to citizens online. Digitalization of books have also been a special effort by the state government.

- **Agra-Lucknow Expressway to be operational by Oct 2016**

Uttar Pradesh government is pushing for its flagship Agra-Lucknow Expressway to be made operational by October 2016. The proposed 302 km expressway is estimated to cost nearly Rs 15,000 crores. Touted to be the longest access-controlled expressway in India and to be funded entirely from the state coffers, it spans across 10 districts, which would be intersected by it, namely Agra, Firozabad, Mainpuri, Etawah, Auraiya, Kannauj, Kanpur city, Unnao, Hardoi and Lucknow.





- **Beautification plan for Varanasi ghats**  
 The Uttar Pradesh Government has a comprehensive plan to beautify the banks of the Ganges in Varanasi. A special cleaning campaign was launched recently at the renovated historic Assi Ghat, along with a special project for restoration and beautification of the ghats. The rest of the work is nearing completion soon.
- **Kushinagar international airport project to get wings**  
 The state government has cleared the project, to be built under Design Build Finance Operate Transfer (DBFOT) basis. The airport, with a runway of 3,200 metres, is estimated to serve about 2,50,000 tourists annually.
- **Taj international airport**  
 Efforts are being made to operate flights from Agra to boost tourism in this sector as there is a major tourist flow both domestic and international in this region.
- **Categorization of Hotels**  
 Different hotels across the state have been classified as 5-star deluxe, 5 star and 3 star hotels in collaboration with the government to provide high end facilities to the tourists visiting the states. The infrastructures of the existing hotels are also getting upgraded in different phases.
- **Participation in fairs, exhibitions and travel marts**  
 The state government has taken initiative in participating in different fairs, exhibitions and travel marts, both national and international, to showcase the potential of the tourism sector of the state and draw more visitors in the future.
- **Paying Guest Schemes**  
 The Government is encouraging people to provide paying guest facilities to tourists so that tourism can be developed and far reached.
- **Bed and Breakfast**  
 The Government is also encouraging families to provide facilities of Bed and Breakfast to tourists to make them feel at home and also maintain a budget.
- **States deploys 'tourist police'**  
 Special initiative has been taken by the state government to deploy 'tourist police' for safety of the visitors. This facility is already implemented in cities like Agra, Varanasi and Lucknow.



- **Guest invitations**  
Guest invites are being arranged for travel writers, people related to travel and tourism trade like travel agents, corporate and special guests to generate awareness about tourism related activities.
- **Investments in the Lion Safari, Etawah and Dudhwa National Park**  
To promote adventure and wild life tourism and attract both domestic and foreign tourist UP Tourism department has taken up an ambitious plan. This area draws a lot of domestic tourists and also wildlife lovers from across the world A budget of Rs. 5 crores each has been allocated to develop the areas of Lion Safari, Etawah and Dudhwa National Park..
- **Lucknow's Hazratganj to become 4G hotspot**  
Hazratganj, the heart of state capital Lucknow got a facelift, as the area was turned to be a free Wi-Fi zone recently. Free Wi-Fi facility was started at the Lucknow Junction railway station also after which Charbagh railway station followed suit. This has tremendous impact for the tourist in terms of connectivity with other locations.
- **Tree plantation drive across the state has been initiated**  
To promote greenery and educate the people of the state on the benefits of eco-tourism, the UP government conducted a plantation drive named 'Van Mahotsav' which consisted of planting 3.15 lakh trees in 80 different places.

## Other important initiatives by the UP state government

Other than the above mentioned points the State Government has also taken a few initiatives in which few of them are at the execution stage and are expected to be completed in the near future. Some of them are:

- o Promoting textile tourism in Varanasi
- o Development of Mathura-Vrindavan as Mega Tourist Circuit Phase – II
- o Tourist Facilitation Centre at Vrindavan
- o Ropeway facilities at Chitrakoot, Barsana and Mirzapur
- o Theme park in Kapilvastu to be completed soon

The UP Tourism has also identified some tourist circuits for tourist infrastructure development. All Circuits have well-planned infrastructure and an itinerary for the traveler and an astounding mix of sights from culture, nature and history. The average duration of these trips are 3 nights- 4days to 4 nights-5 days.



## The Heritage Arc

### *Agra – Lucknow – Varanasi*

Providing an unforgettable experience, The Heritage Arc in Uttar Pradesh provides an opportunity to explore the cultural heritage, historical and natural aspects of the state. Moving on this arc also provides experiences in history, spiritualism, art and nature.

## Wild Life-Eco tourism

### *Dudhwa-Pilibhit-Katarniaghat*

Uttar Pradesh is home to some exquisitely beautiful landscapes, forest-vistas, meandering rivers and breathtakingly beautiful waterfalls and a large number of endangered birds and animals. Showcasing these natural treasures for the visitors for them to appreciate the grandeur and generosity of nature, the Uttar Pradesh Government with its strong commitment to conservation is promoting eco-tourism to the wilderness areas of the state.

## Buddhist Circuit

### *Kapilvastu-Kaushambi-Kushinagar-Sankisa-Sarnath-Sravasti*

Gautam Buddha spent a considerable part of his life in Uttar Pradesh. He attained enlightenment, travelled widely, spread his message and towards the end, attained mahaparinirvan in this region. The circuit has places having grand Stupas, ancient monasteries, Buddhist chants and a steady stream of Buddhist pilgrims and monks who come here for meditation and worship.

### **Bundelkhand Circuit**

### *Bithoor-Chitrakoot-Jhansi-Kalinjar-Mahoba*

## Braj Circuit

### *Agra- Mathura- Vrindavan*

## Awadh Circuit

### *Lucknow-Dewa Sharif-Naimisharanya-Ayodhya-Faizabad*



## Vindhya-Varanasi Circuit

### *Varanasi-Chunar-Vindhyachal*

In addition to above circuits, the following destinations will always remain the primary point of attraction both for foreign and domestic tourist due to its rich cultural background and historical importance. Few of them are illustrated below:

### Agra

Agra is home to the world famous Taj Mahal. This ancient city has wonderful monuments which would leave you awestruck by the sheer brilliance behind the construction.

### Lucknow

The capital of Uttar Pradesh and famously referred to as 'The city of Nawabs', Lucknow retains its ancient charm even today.

### Varanasi

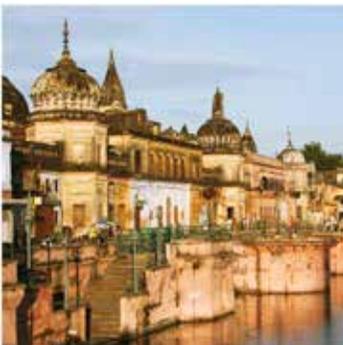
'The Religious Capital of India', Varanasi lies on the banks of the river Ganges and is frequented by pilgrims from various parts of the world. Considered one amongst the seven holy spots for Hindus, the land attracts those who belong to other faiths too.

### Allahabad

Allahabad is an important pilgrim center as Lord Brahma, the creator according to Hinduism, landed at this place on earth. The city is located at the confluence of three rivers namely Ganges, Yamuna and Saraswati.

### Mathura

Mathura is the birthplace of Lord Krishna and hence it is one amongst the seven sacred cities for the followers of Hinduism.



## Fatehpur Sikri

Fatehpur Sikri, was built by the renowned Mughal emperor Akbar. Though the city was at its glorious height only for a short period, owing to scarcity of water, its breathtaking architecture makes the city eternally famous.

## Ayodhya

This ancient city is amongst the sacred cities for followers of Hinduism, as it is believed to be the birthplace of Lord Rama. It is also a place of religious significance for followers of Islam as the place is home to Babri Masjid belonging to the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

## Vrindavan

Vrindavan is an important destination for pilgrims belonging to Hinduism, as it is associated with Lord Krishna. Most of the temples found here are ancient. Located near Mathura, these two cities are considered twin holy cities.

## Jhansi

Jhansi is a blend of religion, history, natural beauties and architectural excellence. This historic city is situated on the banks of Pushpavati river.

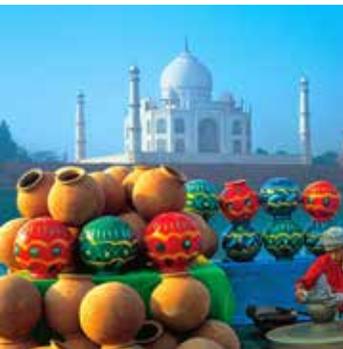
## Kushinagar

Kushinagar is a popular Buddhist centre for pilgrimage. This ancient city gains more importance, as this was where Lord Buddha made his last sermon.

## Sarnath

Sarnath is another important pilgrimage center for followers of Buddhism as it was here that Lord Buddha gave his first sermon. The place is sacred for Jains as well.

Fairs and festivals are the manifestation of cultural heritage and the platform to showcase the tradition followed in the past. Considering this state having pool of historical hotspots, the state tourism department has taken lot of initiative in promoting these fairs and festivals for growth of tourism thereby. Few of them are continuing since ages but now the UP Government has taken



lot of pragmatic approach & positive initiatives to communicate the same. The following are the few examples of the traditional fairs and festivals where thousands of tourists across the country and globe come to witness the show.

### Major Fairs and Festivals of Uttar Pradesh organised by UP Tourism

- Taj Mahotsav, Agra (February)
- Lucknow Mahotsav, Lucknow (November-December)
- Ganga Water Rally, Alahabad-Varanasi (November)
- Buddha Mahotsav, Kushi Nagar (February)
- Buddha Mahotsav, Sarnath, Sravasti, Kaushambi, Sankisa (May)
- Buddha Mahotsav, Kapilvastu (December)
- Kajari Mahotsav, Mirzapur (August)
- Ganga Mahotsav, Varanasi (November)
- Ayurveda Jhansi Mahotsav, Jhansi (November)
- Shopping Festival, Noida (October-November)
- TAJ Balloon Festival, Agra ( November)
- UP Bird Festival, Chambal ( December)

### Other Fairs and Festivals of Uttar Pradesh

- Bateshwar Fair
- Urs, Fatehpur Sikri
- Holi
- Janamashtami
- Deva Mela
- Kailash Fair
- Ramnavami Mela
- Kapilvastu Mahotsav
- Ramayan Mela (Ayodhya and Chitrakoot)
- Jal Vihar Mahotsav
- Azamgarh Mahotsav
- Amir Khusrau Mahotsav

### Inbound tourists speak: A FICCI-MRSS India survey

FICCI-MRSS India conducted a few in-depth interviews with foreign tourists in India, from across the globe, at 3 different locations i.e. Agra, Lucknow, Varanasi. Nearly 125 foreign tourists were interviewed at these locations to



understand what attracted them to Uttar Pradesh and their overall impression of the state. The questions asked during the activity are:

- Were they happy with the overall experience?
- What are the good things that they will remember and cherish about the place?
- What is their overall opinion about the destination / tourist circuits visited with reference to different travel and hospitality parameters?

The findings and suggestions were an eye opener. A few insights:

- Agra and Varanasi are on the top in the travel itinerary for most tourists and they are mostly impressed with the cultural diversity, past heritage and architectural splendor of the age old monuments. For Agra, The Taj Mahal is the point of attraction where few of them visited twice or more during the stay and would love to revisit to witness this unique piece of structure. Some tourists take interest in the historical monuments and structure too.
- Varanasi is a must-visit destination for many of them for its amalgamation of rich cultural heritage of the city coupled with strong spiritual belief and desire specially during the evening Aarti.
- Lucknow is also one of the major destinations where tourists find a complete fusion of ancient India with modern amenities and facilities. The legacy of the traditional Awadhi cuisine co-existing with the modern flavour is a major attraction.
- 90% of the foreign tourist interviewed were happy with the overall experience and expectations during their stay in Uttar Pradesh specially for its rich cultural heritage, architectural landscape, and the warmth of the locals. In addition to these the food tasted good, the rich heritage will be in their memory to vouch for a second visit.
- Majority of the tourists were from European countries getting into India via Mumbai or Delhi with a minimum stay of 25 days with an average 7 -10 days stay in 2-3 locations of Uttar Pradesh.
- Lastly it is important to note that majority of the foreign tourists are aware of only a few destinations which exist since long but are unaware of the new ones or are bit hesitant to explore new destinations / tourist circuit coming up in the state. Hence it is imperative that there

**90% of the foreign tourists interviewed were happy with the overall experience....**



is an urgent need to focus on those destinations through appropriate communication and marketing channels.

## FICCI-MRSS India 12 point Roadmap for growth of In-bound Tourism in Uttar Pradesh

### 1. Promoting UP as a tourist destination

There is an urgent need to promote Uttar Pradesh tourism to foreign visitors and all international markets. The tourism ministry should surely pursue aggressive online and other marketing strategies to promote UP as a must-visit location through seminars and talk shows, joint marketing programmes and use of publicity materials.

### 2. Heritage buildings to be maintained

UP is known for its rich historical background and its unique architectural landscape. The state government in association with Archeological Society of India (ASI) is in active mode for the restoration of the old heritage and monuments but there is a need for lot more initiatives for further restoration. This will finally add as a new destination point in tourist map which will have an economic impact in terms of employment generation.

### 3. Create experiences, not just tourist spots

Steps should be taken to make the tour replete with tour guides, activities for the children, culinary tours, interactivity for the tourist with the culture of the place etc.

### 4. Build great roads and access points

Create better infrastructure and the last mile connectivity. Good roads and approach points to a certain tourist destination will boost the traffic flow.

### 5. Sell niche tourism areas separately

UP tourism should focus on customized travel experiences, luxury spa sessions, rare animal sanctuaries, religious pilgrimage tours. MICE destinations should be encouraged as tourism for the purpose of Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions are no longer limited to big cities.





## **6. Safety and Security**

There is a need for ensuring effective implementation of the policies and actions drafted to ensuring safety and security of tourists. Uttar Pradesh's image needs to be projected as a safe and secure tourist destination for all tourists.

## **7. Skill upgradation**

The hospitality industry should be well groomed and also be able to deliver their best while providing service to the visitors. Investing in training schools will help the young generation focus on the job and acquire adequate skills to make the experience worthwhile.

## **8. Cross promotion and selling**

Cross selling of tourism hotspots of nearby states can help enhance larger inflow of tourists. Package deals should be worked out and engaged for the benefit of the tourists as well as the state. Discounts and offers on group travel is an area which would encourage tourists to bring their family along while on business travel as well.

## **9. Launching new initiatives**

New initiatives should be launched more frequently and the tourists need to be informed well. Adding newer destinations in the tourist map should be a regular feature in the plan of action.

## **10. Promoting Food trail**

India is known for its cuisine and there are a lot of food lovers across the world. Promoting Indian cuisine along with tourism can reap benefits in leaps and bounds.

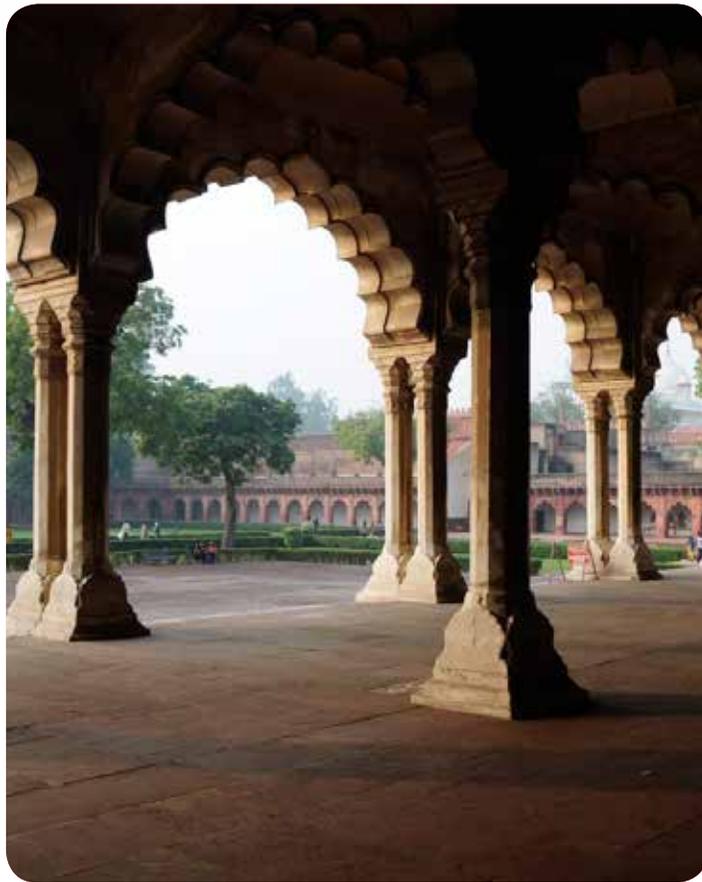
## **11. Appointing Brand Ambassador for endorsement**

UP Tourism can be further endorsed by appointing a brand ambassador. It is essential to capitalise on their star value and fan following so that UP tourism can get a boost and be well accepted by tourists.

## **12. Promoting area based products**

Uttar Pradesh tourism can look into promoting its state products based on areas frequented by tourists, in addition to the state as a whole, like silk from Varanasi region. This would interest visitors who would look for specific things from the state directly to visit the place and businessmen to be able to source things in bulk, if needed.





## 1 | Introduction

# Introduction



## 1.1 Global tourism scenario

“Travel is the only thing you buy that makes you richer.”

Tourism is a rapidly growing industry and has far-reaching economic and environmental impact across the world. It has a global economic contribution (direct, indirect and induced) of almost \$7 trillion. A number of countries, such as France and the United States, are consistently popular tourism destinations, but other less well-known countries are quickly emerging in order to reap the economic benefits of the industry. As the world’s population becomes increasingly mobile, people are free to travel almost anywhere they want.

### Reasons behind the trend in tourism

There are many factors that help explain the growth in tourism:

- More affluence - since 1950 people have become more wealthy. There is more disposable income. People also now have paid time off work for holidays.
- Greater awareness - through advertising or television programmes people are more aware of how and where they can spend their free time.
- More car ownership - more families own a car. This gives greater freedom to choose when and where to spend time.
- Improvements in technology - travelling today is much quicker. Motorways and aircraft have helped reduce the time it takes to get to different countries. Travelling by air has become more accessible as you can book on line and choose more budget options.
- More leisure time - people have paid holidays from work (on average three weeks per year are paid). Also people who are retired remain active for longer. There is also a trend to take more than one holiday in a year.
- More choice - in the past seaside holidays and package holidays were the most popular. The industry is seeing more people look at eco-tourism and more unusual holiday destinations.



## 1.2 Indian Inbound Tourism Industry and its growth

“India is the cradle of the human race, the birthplace of human speech, the mother of history, the grandmother of legend, and the great grandmother of tradition. Our most valuable and most artistic materials in the history of man are treasured up in India only!”

—Mark Twain

India, it is often said, is not a country, but a continent. From the Himalayas to the desert of Rajasthan, to the natural beauty of Kerala and the cultural intensity of Varanasi, India offers something for everyone. Its expansive borders encompass an incomparable range of landscapes, cultures and people. India is one of the world’s most engaging, colourful, chaotic, spiritual and life-affirming countries.

On the streets of any Indian city, it is a mix of great faiths and a multitude of castes and outcastes. The quirky echoes of the British Raj is there in virtually every corner of this great country. The land where the Buddha lived and taught, and whose religious festivals are as old as the rivers that sustain them, is all the more astonishing given the pace of change, ever since Independence in 1947.

Many first-time visitors find themselves unable to see past such glaring disparities. Others come expecting a timeless ascetic wonderland and are surprised to encounter one of the most materialistic societies on the planet. Still more find themselves intimidated by what may seem, initially, an incomprehensible and bewildering continent. But for all its jarring juxtapositions and intractable paradoxes, India remains an utterly compelling destination. India shifts the way you see the world. India truly mesmerizes. India is a must.

## 1.3 Uttar Pradesh In-bound Tourism

With the growth of the online travel industry, in all its different guises, people now have a lot more information at their fingertips and the research process has become a larger, richer part of holiday planning. At the same time, travel industry providers have grown exponentially in India, so visitors now have more options than ever. In turn, this means that India has to work harder to keep up with the demand. The largest percentage of travelers from overseas come from the USA and UK, with Canada, Malaysia, Japan, France, Germany and Russia also heavily represented. Overall, there’s undoubtedly an accelerating understanding of what tourists in India want. Customized tours, cookery schools, village boutique hotels, adventure sports, even campsites, it’s all happening.

It is notable that Uttar Pradesh is witnessing far more businesses specializing in domestic and in-bound tourism. It is amongst the top ranked states in terms of tourist footfalls, both domestic as well as foreigners. This surely is a sign of maturation of the industry, which can continue only with the support of state and national government. The positive trends of the last few years must surely flourish - the statistics speak for itself.



Details of Indian and foreign tourists who visited important tourist places in Uttar Pradesh are as follows:

Year	Indian	Foreigner	Total (In Lacs)
2010	1447.55	23.24	1470.79
2011	1554.30	26.39	1580.69
2012	1683.81	29.89	1713.70
2013	2265.31	32.06	2297.37
2014	1828.20	29.10	1857.30
2015	1975.45	31.42	2005.87

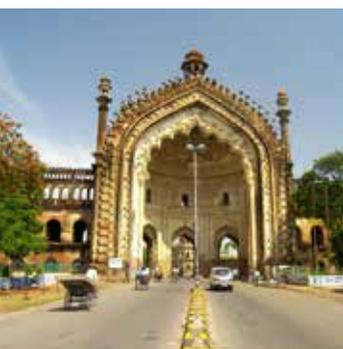
*Note: THE TOURIST VISIT IN MAHA KUMBH MELA/SNAN, ALLAHABAD IN YEAR-2013 OF MONTH JANUARY 2013 TO MARCH 2013 NEARLY OF INDIAN TOURIST-7,83,15,500 AND FOREIGN TOURIST-3,50,000 (TOTAL TOURIST - 7,86,65,500) IS INCLUDED IN ABOVE FIGURE OF ALLAHABAD IN YEAR 2013.*





## **2 | The state of Uttar Pradesh**

## The state of Uttar Pradesh



### 2.1 An overview

Embedded in the heart of India is Uttar Pradesh, a land where cultures have evolved and religions emerge. The greatness of this land lies not only in this confluence, but also in the emergence of cultural and religious traditions along some of the greatest rivers in the Indian sub-continent – the Ganga and the Yamuna. Throughout history, great cities have emerged and established along great rivers. Origins of the stories in two of the greatest Indian epics Ramayan and Mahabharat (which includes Bhagavad Gita) are Ayodhya and Hastinapur respectively, both in Uttar Pradesh. The birth place of Lord Krishna is believed to be Mathura. Prayag and Varanasi are other important cities of cultural, intellectual and philosophical identity. The state cannot be seen as a standalone entity, it has always been a part of the great empires spread from Taxila to Nalanda. Since independence, the state has maintained a dominant role within India. It has given the country several prime ministers, including Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, Smt Indira Gandhi and Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

The vast majority of the people, including members of all levels of the caste hierarchy, are Hindus. Muslims are the largest religious minority. The state of Uttar Pradesh has 75 districts which have 18 divisions. Lucknow is the capital city of this state.

Uttar Pradesh is a tourist paradise. The majestic Himalayas offer unique opportunities for eco-tourism, mountain climbing, trekking, skiing, etc. Its river system provides scope for manifold water sports and challenging surf riding. Its rich flora and fauna are nature's generous gift. Its ancient mausoleums, monuments and architecture are not merely of historic importance but also unique as testified by the inimitable Taj Mahal. Its Hindu, Jain and Sikh religious centres, fairs and festivals attract the domestic tourist and pilgrims in thousands and present a fascinating and unbelievable spectacle to the foreign tourists.

Uttar Pradesh has emerged among the top frontrunner states in attracting foreign tourists from all over the world. It ranks third in the number of foreign tourist arrivals to Indian states, after Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, and second as regards domestic tourists. The Taj is predictably the biggest attraction in UP, bringing in the maximum tourists and foreign exchange earnings. The most favoured spot for foreign tourists in UP is the Taj Mahal in Agra which attracted the biggest chunk of foreign visitors (over 14.78 lakh). The second most popular tourist destination in UP is the holy city of Varanasi which logged 6.80 lakh foreign visitors.



## 2.2 Growth prospects

Uttar Pradesh has recently witnessed an increased thrust on tourism sector. Initiatives taken by the state government through steps like enhancing air connectivity, development of heritage sites, better management of pilgrimage places and others have also opened up job prospects across the state. A prominent tourist hub for foreign visitors UP has the ability to mobilize investments in hospitality sector from both private and public sources and also attract indirect revenue like tax collections thereby filling state's coffers.

## 2.3 Role of the State Government

The role of the state government of Uttar Pradesh to promote tourism is commendable. The government has recognised the tremendous potential that UP holds to further increase in-flow of tourists, both domestic and foreign. To make things happen, the state has taken initiatives to open up its tourism sector outside India through steps like conducting road-shows, offering incentives to private investors for tourism development like land allotment on priority basis, offering significant interest subsidy on hotel projects and other such measures. This has immensely contributed to the development of the tourism sector and is reaping benefits. Hard-selling UP's tourism and investment potential, Chief Minister Shri Akhilesh Yadav said in May 2015 that two film cities will be set up in Uttar Pradesh which would give an additional impetus to the heritage and tourism possibilities in the state.

## 2.4 Promoting Tourism: Government initiatives

- **The promotion and branding of the Agra-Varanasi-Lucknow Heritage Arc played an important role in boosting the tourist traffic.**  
There has been a sudden increase in the tourist flow after these circuits were introduced. Tourist facilities have been spruced up, and heritage walks have also been started in these three cities recently.
- **The government has given special attention to promoting Heritage and Eco-Tourism for foreign tourists.**  
These have witnessed increased tourist arrivals in the form of weekend getaways.
- **Tourist facilities have been spruced up, and heritage walks have also been started in Agra-Varanasi-Lucknow in the last couple of years. Heritage walk in Kaiserbagh to come up soon.**  
This has catered to a wide range of tourists, who would want to spend some time in leisure. Heritage walks has been welcomed by the elderly travelers and also foreigners who are in search of a bit of history.
- **Revival plans for the long lost Awadhi cuisine.**  
This revival plan would help develop a Food Trail. It is expected to be a hit within travelers looking for long lost authentic Awadhi cuisine.



- **An annual fest of 10-days, the Taj Mahotsav is an eagerly awaited festival every year**  
Organized by UP Tourism, this 10 days long carnival is actually a vibrant platform that gives you information of India where you can find India's rich arts, crafts, cultures, cuisine, dance and music.
- **Launch of e-books on Uttar Pradesh**  
E-governance is poised to take a big leap in Uttar Pradesh with the state lining up a slew of initiatives to empower citizens in line with the 'Digital India' programme. It is putting in place a system which would deliver vital services to citizens online. Digitalisation of books have also been a special effort by the government.
- **Agra-Lucknow Expressway to be operational by Oct 2016**  
Uttar Pradesh government is pushing for its flagship Agra-Lucknow Expressway to be operational by October 2016. The proposed 302 km expressway is estimated to cost nearly Rs 15,000 crores. Touted to be the longest access-controlled expressway in India and to be funded entirely from the state coffers, it spans across 10 districts, which would be intersected by it, namely Agra, Firozabad, Mainpuri, Etawah, Auraiya, Kannauj, Kanpur City, Unnao, Hardoi and Lucknow.
- **Beautification plan for Varanasi ghats**  
The Uttar Pradesh Government has a comprehensive plan to beautify the banks of the Ganges in Varanasi. A special cleaning campaign was launched recently at the renovated historic Assi Ghat, along with a special project for restoration and beautification of the ghats. It is soon to be completed.
- **Kushinagar international airport project to get wings**  
The state government has cleared the project, to be built under Design Build Finance Operate Transfer (DBFOT) basis. The airport, with a runway of 3,200 metres, is estimated to serve about 2,50,000 tourists annually.
- **Promoting pro-poor tourism**  
The Uttar Pradesh government aims to unlock the huge potential of the heritage of the state, through Pro-Poor Tourism, for inclusive growth and poverty reduction, particularly in the low-income areas. It is expected to improve the standard of living of the people, create more job opportunities and promote thriving local enterprises.
- **Taj international airport**  
Efforts are being made to operate flights from Agra to boost tourism in this sector as there is a major tourist flow both domestic and international in this region.
- **Categorization of Hotels**  
Different hotels across the state have been classified as 5-star deluxe, 5 star and 3 star hotels in collaboration with the government to provide high end facilities to the tourists visiting the states. The infrastructure of the existing hotels are also to be upgraded soon.



- **Participation in fairs, exhibitions and travel marts**  
The state government has taken initiative in participating in different fairs, exhibitions and travel marts, both national and international, to showcase the potential of the tourism sector of the state and draw more visitors in the future.
- **Paying Guest Schemes**  
The Government is encouraging people to provide paying guest facilities to tourists so that tourism can be developed and far reached.
- **Bed and Breakfast**  
The Government is also encouraging families to provide facilities of Bed and Breakfast to tourists to make them feel at home and also maintain a budget.
- **States deploys 'tourist police'**  
Special initiative has been taken by the state government to deploy 'tourist police' for safety of the visitors. This facility is already implemented in cities like Agra, Varanasi and Lucknow.
- **Guest invitations**  
Guest invites are being arranged for travel writers, people related to travel and tourism trade like travel agents, corporates and special guests to generate awareness about the tourism related activities.
- **Investments in the Lion Safari, Etawah and Dudhwa national Park is a welcome move**  
A budget of Rs. 5 crores each has been allocated to develop the areas of Lion Safari, Etawah and Dudhwa National Park. This area draws a lot of domestic tourists and also wildlife lovers from across the world.
- **Tree plantation drive across the state has been initiated**  
To promote greenery and educate the people of the state on the benefits of eco-tourism, the UP government conducted a plantation drive named 'Van Mahotsav' which consisted of planting 3.15 lakh trees in 80 different places.
- **Lucknow's Hazratganj to become 4G hotspot**  
Hazratganj got a facelift, as the area was turned to be a free Wi-Fi zone recently. Free Wi-Fi facility was started at the Lucknow Junction railway station also after which Charbagh railway station followed suit.

### Other important initiatives by the UP state government

Other than the above mentioned points the State Government has also taken a few initiatives which are mostly in the planning and execution stage and are expected to be complete in the near future. Some of them are:

- o Promoting textile tourism in Varanasi



- o Development of Mathura-Vrindavan as Mega Tourist Circuit Phase – II
- o Tourist Facilitation Centre at Vrindavan
- o Ropeway facilities at Chitrakoot, Barsana and Mirzapur
- o Theme park in Kapilvastu to be completed soon

## 2.5 Socio-Economic impact on Uttar Pradesh

Tourism acts as a powerful agent for developing the socio-economic standards of the state. It has stimulated employment and investment across the state and has contributed in modifying economic structure and has made a significant contribution towards a better living among the youth. The money spent by the foreign tourists in a country is turned over several times and has been a boost to reciprocate to the need of the ever increasing demands and challenges. With enhancing the tourist experience, it also simultaneously contributes to improving local living conditions and livelihood opportunities to the people of Uttar Pradesh. Tourism stimulates economic growth by generating income, employment, investment and exports. But it also generates valuable spin-off benefits, including preservation of cultural heritage, improved infrastructure and local community facilities.

Uttar Pradesh is one of India's most iconic states which attract 226 million domestic and just over 2 million international visitors out of 1.1 billion domestic and nearly 7 million international tourists visiting India. The Uttar Pradesh government aims to unlock the huge potential of the heritage of the state, through Pro-Poor Tourism, for inclusive growth and poverty reduction, particularly in the low-income areas. It is expected to improve the standard of living of the people, create more job opportunities and promote thriving local enterprises.

Tourism is not limited only to activities in the hospitality, transportation and entertainment sector with visitor attractions, such as, theme parks, amusement parks, sports facilities, museums etc., but tourism and its management are closely connected to all major functions, processes and procedures that are pivotal to various areas related to tourism as a system. It involves the functions of planning, organizing, coordinating, training, monitoring and evaluating at all levels (international, national, regional, local). Therefore, tourism can be integrated into the functional unit of the economy. This will help structure the entire tourism industry of the state enabling productive private investments and associated job creating opportunities within the youth and women. It is a priority aimed at increasing the net benefits to the poor and ensuring that tourism growth contributes majorly to the upliftment of the area and the people around it.

Tourism whether on a large scale or low scale, in no small measure affects the host community. This is particularly evident during the period of the events and sometimes afterwards. Tourism is an economic sector which contributes significantly to the economic growth of a region and to the labor market, and creates occupation opportunities directly and indirectly through the supply of goods and the necessary services for tourist activities. In addition to all these it also positively contributes to the maintenance of natural environment by protecting, creating or maintaining national parks or other protected areas.



### 3 | The Circuits

## The Circuits



Uttar Pradesh has possibly one of the largest numbers of tourist-worthy spots present in any state in India. The state is not only important for domestic tourism but is also famed for its presence on the World Tourist Map. Additionally, it draws a large number of tourists to a host of locations for religious purposes, heritage monuments, historical importance or wildlife. Besides, its proximity to other important tourist destination states like Rajasthan, Delhi and Uttaranchal provides the state a competitive advantage. UP offers a huge range of destinations and activities to the potential tourist, comprising historical cities, wildlife sanctuaries, pilgrim centres and adventure destinations. The UP Tourism has also identified some tourist circuits for tourist infrastructure development.

All Circuits have well-planned infrastructure and a itinerary for the traveler and an astounding mix of sights from culture, nature and history. All the travelers need to do, is to pack their bags and explore Uttar Pradesh in all its glory.

Here are the names of the main circuits

### **The Heritage Arc**

Agra – Lucknow – Varanasi

### **Wild Life-Eco tourism**

Dudhwa-Pilibhit-Katarniaghat

### **Buddhist Circuit**

Kapilvastu-Kaushambi-Kushinagar-Sankisa-Sarnath-Sravasti

### **Bundelkhand**

Bithoor-Chitrakoot-Jhansi-Kalinjar-Mahoba

### **Braj**

Agra Mathura Vrindavan

### **Awadh**

Lucknow-Dewa Sharif-Naimisharanya-Ayodhya-Faizabad

### **Vindhya-Varanasi**

Varanasi-Chunar-Vindhyachal



### 3.1 The Heritage Arc (Agra – Lucknow – Varanasi)

A unique opportunity to explore Uttar Pradesh.

Conceptualized as an experiential journey, The Heritage Arc traverses through three very distinct, yet definitive, aspects of the many ideas and kingdoms that have flourished in the rich fertile lands of Uttar Pradesh. The Heritage Arc effortlessly links together great epochs of Indian history, art, culture and tradition – Agra, Lucknow and Varanasi.

Exploring Uttar Pradesh along the mighty rivers takes the visitors on a magical trip. The Heritage Arc in Uttar Pradesh provides an opportunity to explore the state in all its glory. The Arc signifies heritage in terms of cultural, historical and natural aspects. The Arc travels from one end of the state to the other, takes travelers through Agra region, Lucknow region and Varanasi region, with several exciting destinations along the way.

A kaleidoscopic journey of monuments, architectural wonders, pilgrimage centres, spiritual experiences and wildlife, the journey define the quintessential Uttar Pradesh. The Heritage Arc is a veritable treasure trove of sights to see and experiences and provides a close look at the celebration of life in this vast state. Follow the Arc. Get enchanted.

Destinations on the Arc regions covered in the heritage are Agra, Lucknow, Varanasi.

With an intention to boost tourism in Uttar Pradesh, the state government has developed the “Heritage Arc” involving Agra, Lucknow and Varanasi on the lines of “Agra-Jaipur-Delhi triangle”. Agra, Lucknow, Varanasi has been developed by improving infrastructure, including roads, pathways and condition of monuments, among other things, to attract tourists in a big way.

For tourists looking for a short and concise journey through history and culture of north India, including a tinge of romance of the Taj Mahal – this journey proves just perfect!

Already a part of the Golden Triangle circuit, Agra is easily the most frequented city in India. Located on the banks of the river Yamuna, it boasts of many Mughal era monuments. Taj Mahal, Sikandra or Akbar’s tomb, Itmad-ud-Daulah and the Agra Fort being the most prominent among them. Fatehpur Sikri, just outside of Agra makes of a great half day trip!

Lucknow, the state capital and also the Land of the Nawabs still preserves its culture. Not just another chapter that folds and unfolds itself each time one visits this epicenter of culture. The surviving monuments of the city mark the evolution of an interesting style in architecture. Some of the sites that preserve this culture are Bada Imambara, La Martiniere College, Chota Imambara, Clock Tower and Rumi Darwaza.

And finally Varanasi is a sublime Indian city! Considered to be one of the oldest inhabited cities, Varanasi is a vibrant amalgamation of history, spirituality and music. A pilgrimage for your soul some of the must-do’s here are touring the Ghats for Ganga aarti, Vishwanath temple, Banaras Hindu University and Sarnath.



### **Agra region**

Agra-Fatehpur Sikri, Barsana, Bateshwar, Chambal Sanctuary, Etawah Lion Safari, Gokul, Nandgaon, Mathura, Vrindavan

### **Lucknow region**

Lucknow, Bithoor, Dewa Sharif, Dudhwa, Katarnia Ghat, Naimisharanya, Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary

### **Varanasi region**

Varanasi, Sarnath, Vindhyachal, Sonbhadra, Chunar, Kushinagar, Kapilvastu, Sravasti

## **3.2 Wildlife - Eco tourism Circuit (Lucknow – Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary – Chambal**

### **Safari – Dudhwa National Park)**

Uttar Pradesh with its 16620 sq km forest area is home to some exquisitely beautiful landscapes, forest-vistas, meandering rivers and breathtakingly beautiful waterfalls and a large number of endangered birds and animals. There are forest dwelling tribes and communities who have maintained their traditions and culture while embracing modern technologies and life-styles. There is one national park, 11 wild life sanctuaries and 24 bird sanctuaries to provide protection to endangered biodiversity of the state. Some bird sanctuaries have been declared important bird areas by the Bombay Natural History Society.

In an endeavor to showcase these natural treasures for the tourists with active participation of local communities so that the visitors can appreciate the grandeur and generosity of nature, understand importance of recycling and curbing consumption and imbibe the culture of nature and resource conservation, the Uttar Pradesh Government with its strong commitment to conservation is promoting eco-tourism to the wilderness areas of the state.

### **Dudhwa**

- This National Park is home to tigers, leopards, varieties of deer and antelopes, elephants and birds
- A quiet, tranquil and green nest in the Tarai foothills is an excellent weekend getaway
- The rich green forests and the rivers flowing through it give you the complete wilderness experience



### Pilibhit

- The Pilibhit Tiger Reserve is located in the districts of Pilibhit, Lakhimpur Kheri and Bahraich on the India-Nepal border in the foothills of the Himalayas and the plains of the Terai
- It is one of India's Project Tiger reserves and is heavily forested, giving a good prey base for tigers' survival
- It is home to a habitat for over 127 animals, 556 bird species and 2,100 flowering plants
- The fauna includes tiger, Indian leopard, swamp deer, hispid hare and Bengal floricans

### Katarnia Ghat

- A swathe of pristine forest about 200 km from Lucknow in Bahraich district
- The Girwa river is home to fresh water Gangetic dolphins
- Have a roaring experience amidst tigers, leopards, deer and antelopes

### CIRCUITS OF ECOTOURISM

1. Western Wildlife Circuit
2. Lion Safari and Riverine Circuit
3. Terai Tiger Circuit
4. Bundelkhand Adventure Circuit
5. Vindhay Mountain Circuit
6. Western Bird/ Wetland Circuit
7. Central Bird/ Wetland Circuit
8. Ganges Basin Circuit
9. Eastern Wildlife Circuit

## 3.3 Buddhist Circuit (Lucknow – Sravasti – Kushinagar – Varanasi)

Gautam Buddha spent a considerable part of his life in this area. He attained enlightenment, travelled widely, spread his message and towards the end, attained Mahaparinirvan in this region. The circuit has places having grand stupas, ancient monasteries, Buddhist chants and a steady stream of Buddhist pilgrims and monks who come here for meditation and worship.

## 3.4 The Bundelkhand Circuit

The romance and magic of Bundelkhand are still alive today. Rugged palaces and forts, tough, valiant and courageous people make a visit to this land a magical experience. Tales of chivalry and valour bear a silent testimony to the splendor of an era long gone by.



### 3.5 The Braj Circuit

This ancient land is an integral part of the life of Lord Krishna where melody, harmony and art reign supreme in this region steeped in history and legends. A visit to the temples and monuments in Braj is a trip straight into history. It is also the seat of the erstwhile great empire of the Mughal kings.

### 3.6 Awadh – Lucknow Circuit

Peace, harmony and finesse have made this region known all over the world. Situated in the heart of Uttar Pradesh, this region has a global identity for its culture, cuisine, literature and spirituality. Monuments, spiritual destinations and nature's nests beckons the travelers to Awadh.

### 3.7 Vindhya - Varanasi Circuit

Located along the Ganges, Varanasi is among the most ancient living cities in the world. It is a sacred place for all Hindus, Jains and Buddhists. The Vindhya ranges of mountains straddle the states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The region not only has religious and spiritual significance but is also among the richest in mineral wealth.

### 3.8 Identified High Potential Tourism Sites

On the basis of study and analysis of existing tourist sites as well as potential sites having some locational / physiographical advantages has been identified to promote tourism further. These identified sites have potentials of self sustainability. A few of them are:

#### **Hastinapur Tourist Hub**

In order to recreate the grandeur of the Mahabharata era and to create an experience for the visitors, it is proposed that the journey of Hastinapur Tourist Hub will start with a majestic gate with carvings and relief work of Mahabharat events and characters to create a 'flash back' impact on the tourists while entering the city.

#### **Garhmukteswar Tourist Hub**

With the historical background of Garhmukteswar as a religious pilgrimage centre, it is proposed to develop it as a religious tourism hub which can act as a counter magnet to Haridwar. The proposal is mainly focused on pilgrimage and the area designated as 'Ganga Dhaam Complex'.



## Development of Greater Noida as a Recreational Hub

The proximity to Greater Noida to Delhi and the upcoming world class planned development has led Gautam Budh Nagar District to attract several capital investment projects. The township of Noida, Greater Noida and proposed Ganga Expressway Development Authority already have sites earmarked for the recreational/tourist activities in their Master Plan. Places of interest in this area include Okhla Bird sanctuary, Ambedkar Park (Noida) and Dronacharya Village.

## Recreational Cum Institutional Hub along the Hindon River at Ghaziabad

Lies next to the bridge of NH 24 and Hindon River. Connectivity, availability of land, proximity to natural water body (Hindon River) are main advantages for creating Ghaziabad as tourist hub which also caters to the local and regional population.

## In-bound tourists speak: A FICCI-MRSS India survey

FICCI-MRSS India conducted a few in-depth interviews with foreign tourists in India, from across the globe, at 3 different locations i.e. Agra, Lucknow, Varanasi. Nearly 100 foreign tourist were interviewed at different locations to understand what attracted them to Uttar Pradesh and their overall impression of the state.

Questions asked:

- Were they happy with the overall experience?
- What are the good things that they will remember and cherish about the place?
- What is their overall opinion about the destination / tourist circuits visited with reference to different travel and hospitality parameters?

The research team of FICCI-MRSS India put in a lot of hard work to get an insight which could be used as a feedback for strategy makers of tourism departments.

Few interesting insights are enumerated below:

- Majority of the tourists were from European countries getting into India via Mumbai or Delhi with a minimum stay of 25 days with an average 7 -10 days stay in 2-3 locations of Uttar Pradesh.
- Agra and Varanasi are very understandably on the top in their travel itinerary and they are mostly impressed with the cultural diversity, past heritage and architectural splendour of the age old monuments. For Agra, The Taj Mahal is the point of attraction where few of them visited twice or more during the stay and would love to revisit to witness this unique piece of structure. It is very interesting to note that this is a repeat visit for few foreigners to see Taj. "I can't forget the beauty and brightness of structure... it is awesome, its incredible", "I documented everything about Taj so that I can try to understand more about this phenomenal structure", says Merlin from UK.
- Some tourists take interest in the Red Fort at Agra, for its historical backdrop.



- Interestingly Varanasi is an unforgettable destination for many of them for its amalgamation of rich cultural heritage of the city coupled with strong spiritual belief and desire specially during the evening Aarti. The colourful looms and craft items are also a major attraction for the tourists. “It is great to watch this traditional spiritual performance and strong belief in the locals. It is an amazing experience”. “The traditional clothes are very nice and attractive. I liked it very much”, asserts Sandra who has come from Australia.
- The state capital Lucknow is also one of the major destination where tourists find a complete fusion of ancient India with modern amenities and facilities. They are very much delighted to meet people around, visiting few monuments within the city and enjoying the legacy of the traditional Awadhi cuisine co-existing with the modern flavour .
- 90% of the foreign tourist interviewed were happy with the overall experience and expectations during their stay in Uttar Pradesh specially for its rich cultural heritage, architectural landscape, and the warmth of the locals. In addition to these the food tasted good, the rich heritage will be in their memory to vouch for a second visit.
- However, it is evident from the sample survey that there is a genuine need for improvement in infrastructure across the state. The last mile connectivity is a bit of a concern. Once looked into, this would bring out the “WoW” factor of the tourist significantly so that the overall satisfaction score goes up. Thus it is imperative to strengthen the improvement action plan and work out the modalities for speedy implementation of the same so that the inbound tourist arrival increases in exponential manner. It is not only going to bring more tourists in the state but also help in generating employment opportunity to take care of anticipated burgeoning growth of the tourism sector.
- Lastly it is important to note that majority of the foreign tourists are aware of only a few destinations which exist since long but are unaware of the new ones or are not wanting to explore new destinations / tourist circuit coming up in the state. Hence it is imperative that there is an urgent need to focus to those destinations through appropriate media especially through internet advertisement. Also it is very much important to engage tour operators during this whole promotional measure to promote and market those new destinations to intending travelers and corporates looking for new destinations for MICE and offsite activities.

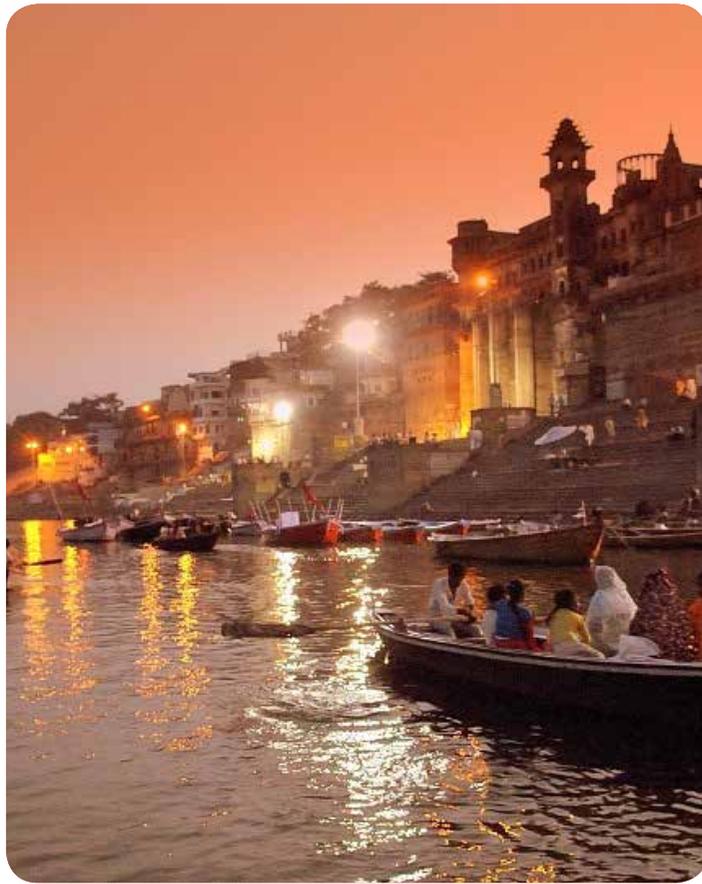
The most preferred destinations for foreign tourists are as follows:

Agra (for Taj Mahal), Fatehpur Sikri, Jhansi, Allahabad, Varanasi, Sarnath, Lucknow, Sunoli, Kushinagar and Kapilavastu

Whereas domestic tourists have a wider range of preferences covering rich archeological spots to places of cultural heritage, places that are of historical importance to religious places. Domestic tourists also show a keen interest for traditional crafts, ancient culture to the luxurious extravagance of the Nawaab. In 2014, the domestic tourist arrival as per official record was 18 million with a continuous growth in inbound sector.

The most preferred destinations for domestic tourists are as follows:

Agra, Mathura, Vrindavan & Govardhan, Radhakund, Fatehpur Sikri, Jhansi, Allahabad, Chitrakut, Mahoba, Varanasi, Vidhyanchal, Lucknow, Garhmukteshwar and Ayodha



## 4 | Main Attractions

## Main Attractions



### 4.1 The Taj Mahal, Agra

‘A teardrop on the cheek of eternity’- Rabindranath Tagore

The Taj was designated a World Heritage Site in 1983 and looks as immaculate today as when it was first constructed – though it underwent a huge restoration project in the early 20th century. Every year, tourists flock this historic building to catch a once-in-a-lifetime glimpse of what is widely considered the most beautiful building in the world. Few leave disappointed.

According to recent reports, there has been a surge in the number of domestic tourists visiting the world heritage building. As compared to 2014 when 53.7 lakh Indians bought Taj tickets, 59.15 lakh did so in 2015. In 2015, 6.36 lakh foreigners visited the Taj Mahal.

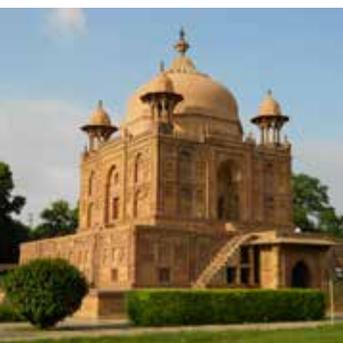
Built by Emperor Shah Jahan the monument stands testimony to his love for his third wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who died giving birth to their 14th child in 1631. The death of Mumtaz left the emperor heartbroken. Construction of the Taj began the following year and, although the main building is thought to have been built in eight years, the whole complex was not completed until 1653. Not long after it was finished Shah Jahan was overthrown by his son Aurangzeb and imprisoned in Agra Fort where, for the rest of his days, he could only gaze out at his creation through a window. Following his death in 1666, Shah Jahan was buried here alongside Mumtaz. In total, some 20,000 people from India and Central Asia worked on the building. Specialists were brought in from as far away as Europe to produce the exquisite marble screens and pietra dura (marble inlay work) made with thousands of semiprecious stones. Truly “It made the sun and the moon shed tears from their eyes” as described by Emperor Shah Jahan. The Taj remains closed every Friday to anyone not attending prayers at the mosque.

#### Main attractions

Agra Fort, Itmad-Ud-Daula, Fatehpur Sikri, Wildlife SOS, Sikandara, Aram Bagh, Khas Mahal, Panch Mahal, Musamman Burj, Jama Masjid, Agra Art Gallery, Mehtab Bagh.

### 4.2 Lucknow

Primarily referred to as ‘The city of Nawabs’, Lucknow, the capital city of Uttar Pradesh retains its ancient charm with such authority that you will find yourself in a different



world. It was the capital of Nawabs of Awadh. The city enjoyed the generosity of the Nawabs and hence flourished in music, literature, arts and crafts.

### **Main attractions**

Bara Imambara, British Residency, Chhota Imambara, Lucknow Zoo, Dr. Ambedkar Park, Hazratganj, Constantia House, Lucknow Museum, Rumi Darwaza, Chattar Manzil, Begum Hazrat Mahal Park.

## **4.3 Varanasi**

‘The Religious Capital of India’ as Varanasi is called, is frequented by pilgrims from various parts of the world. Considered one amongst the seven holy spots for those who follow Hinduism, the land attracts those who belong to other faiths too. It lies on the banks of the river Ganges, which adds magic to the atmosphere.

### **Main attractions**

River Ganges, Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Sarnath, Manikarnika Ghat, Archaeological Museum, Man Mandir Ghat, Chaumsathi Ghat, Ramnagar Fort, Chunar Fort, Banaras Ghats.

## **4.4 Allahabad**

Allahabad is an important pilgrim center as Lord Brahma, the creator according to Hinduism is believed to have landed at this place on earth. The city is located at the confluence of three rivers namely Ganges, Yamuna and Saraswathi. This ancient city, also called as Prayag, witnesses one of the largest gatherings of religious nature during the Kumbh Mela held once every 12 years.

### **Main attractions**

Triveni Sangam, Khusro Bagh, Allahabad Fort, Patalpuri Temple and Akshaya Vat, Jawahar Planetarium, Anand Bhavan

## **4.5 Mathura**

Mathura is considered the birthplace of Lord Krishna and hence it is one amongst the seven sacred cities for followers of Hinduism. This ancient town has a number of temples belonging to various ages. It was earlier a Buddhist center and was home to 20 monasteries before Hinduism rose to prominence.

### **Main attractions**

Krishna Janma Bhoomi Mandir, Jama Masjid, Dwarkadhish Temple, Kusum Sarovar, Radha Kund, Kans Qila, Mathura Museum, Raja Bharatpur Palace, Govardhan Hill



## 4.6 Fatehpur Sikri

Fatehpur Sikri, the 16th century city, was built by the renowned Mughal emperor Akbar. Though the city was at its glorious height only for a short period owing to scarcity of water, its breathtaking architecture makes the city eternally famous. The palaces found here reflect the architectural brilliance of the bygone era.

### Main attractions

Panch Mahal, Diwan-i-Khas, Buland Darwaza, Johbhai Palace, Lotus Throne, Khwabgah

## 4.7 Ayodhya

Ayodhya, the birthplace of Lord Rama is amongst the sacred cities for followers of Hinduism. It is also a place of religious significance for followers of Islam as the place is home to Babri Masjid belonging to the 16th century.

### Main attractions

Moti Mahal, Kanak Bhawan, Hanuman Garhi, Ramkot, Treta Ke Thakur, Mausoleum of Bahu Begum, Gulab Bari, Guptar Ghat, Faizabad Museum

## 4.8 Vrindavan

Vrindavan is an important destination for pilgrims belonging to Hinduism, as it is associated with Lord Krishna. Most of the temples found here are ancient. Located near Mathura, these two cities are considered twin holy cities.

### Main attractions

Yamuna River, Govind Dev Temple, Iskcon Temple, Kesi Ghat, Bankey Bihari Temple, Shahji Temple, Rangaji Temple

## 4.9 Jhansi

A complete blend of religion, history, natural beauties and architectural excellence, Jhansi has its share in the common trait of the land. This historic city is situated on Pahujor Pushpavati riverbanks.

### Main attractions

Jhansi Fort, Rani Mahal, Government Museum, Chirgaon, Maharaja Gangadhar Rao Ki Chatri, Parichha



#### 4.10 Kushinagar

Kushinagar is a popular Buddhist pilgrim center. This ancient city gains more importance, as this was where Lord Buddha made his last sermon. The historic significance of the place can be gauged by the archaeological evidences unearthed from here. The place finds a place in Hieun Tsang's travelogues as well.

##### Main attractions

Sun Temple, Mahaparinirvana Temple, Kushinagar Museum, Ramabhar Stupa, Chinese Temple, Wat Thai Temple, Pawanagar

#### 4.11 Sarnath

Yet another important pilgrim center for followers of Buddhism as it was here Buddha gave his first sermon. The place is sacred for Jains as well. Excavations conducted here reveal how this ancient city flourished in the past.

##### Main attractions

Chaukhandi Stupa, Sarnath Museum, Deer Park, Thai Temple, Mulagandha Kuti Vihar, Dharmek Stupa, Tibetan Temple

#### 4.12 Kapilvastu

Kapilvastu was the ancient capital of the Sakya Clan, whose ruler 'Shuddhodhan' was the father of the Buddha, for which reason the Buddha is also referred to as Sakyamuni. The Sakya domain was one of the sixteen 'Mahajanpads' of the 6th Century B.C. Prince Gautam, as the Buddha was then known, left his palace in Kapilvastu at the age of 29, and revisited in kapilvastu at the age of 29, and revisited in 12 years later, Today, Kapilvastu comprises of the several villages, chief among them are Piprahwa, Ganvaria and Salagarh.

#### 4.13 The Hidden treasures of Uttar Pradesh

##### Sonbhadra

- Ancient land where icons of Mahabharata era are found besides the famous Shiv Dwar and Renukeshwar temple
- For the nature-lovers a trip to Lakhaniya and Mukkha falls besides the amazing Fossil Park are a rare treat
- The Vijaygarh fort is a symbol of the might of the ancient rulers of this region
- The cave paintings in the region are of great antiquity

##### Hastinapur

- A sacred pilgrimage for Jain devotees who believe that three Jain Tirthankars were born here



- Temples dedicated to several Mahabharata characters such as the Pandavas and Draupadi add to the historical importance of this town

### **Kalinjar**

- The Kalinjar Fort, situated at a height of 700 ft, is a veritable historical treasure house
- The picturesque Vindhya ranges has its own charm that leaves the travelers fascinated
- The Neelkanth Temple, legend says, is built at the spot where Lord Shiva, after consuming poison that emerged from the churning of ocean, came to rest for some time

### **Mahoba**

- The well fortified hilltop fort and the man-made lakes built by Chandela kings are engineering marvels
- The Alha-Udal ballads narrating tales of valour of the Bundela warriors owe their origin from Mahoba
- The Sun Temple at Rahila is a unique 9th century granite structure

### **Parichha**

Situated on the banks of the Betwa river, it is popular for the Parichha reservoir and dam. While the reservoir is a popular haunt for water sports, the dam offers a picturesque view of the reservoir and its surroundings.

### **Bithoor**

A prominent centre of Hindu pilgrimage, it is believed to be the birthplace of Ram's sons Luv and Kush. Places to see in this quiet town are Valmiki Ashram, Brahmavart Ghat, Patthar Ghat, Dhruva Teela, Lav Kush temple, Nana Saheb Smarak and Siddhidham Ashram.

### **Kalpi**

Around Kalpi there is an impressive ruin of a fort and several temples of interest, while in the neighborhood are many ancient tombs. Among the places to see are Pataleshwar Temple and Vedvyas Temple. It is also famous for a wide variety of sweets.

## **4.14 Lesser known facts about Uttar Pradesh**

A few facts about India's most populous state:

### **Jalesar**

The next time you see those lovely small cast bells hung around the necks of cows in Switzerland, be sure to ask where it comes from. You'd be surprised by the answer. Jalesar,



a small town with a population of around 40,000 in Etah district is known for casting brass bells and exporting it around the world.

### **Karmnasa**

This is a river unlike any other in India. As its Hindi name suggests, it is the only cursed river and it is believed that touching its water would ruin one's plans. There's hardly any development along this river. People around this river just eat dry fruits because cooking food would require water!

### **Muzaffarnagar**

The Jat-dominated district in western Uttar Pradesh has the highest per capita income in the state. One of its blocks, Shamli, is said to have the highest LIC premiums in the country.

### **The Parijat Tree**

Roughly 40 kms away from Lucknow, stands the Parijat tree, which is supposed to be the only one of its kind in the world. It is known for its flower, which changes colour during the day. Legend has it that the parijat plant was brought down from heaven by Lord Krishna for his second wife, Satyabhama.

## **4.15 Wildlife/ Bird sanctuaries of Uttar Pradesh**

### **Dudhwa National Park**

The Dudhwa National Park is dissipated across a sprawling area of approximately 490 square km in close proximity with the Indo-Nepal but located in Uttar Pradesh. The Dudhwa National Park is also flanked by the auspicious presence of the placid river called Suheli at its southern fringe. The Dudhwa National Park has been around since 1870s. The sole change undergone by the Dudhwa National Park is the fact that it was previously designated as a Tiger Reserve but in the year 1977 it achieved the status of being a National Park.

The major attractions of the Dudhwa National Park: Swamp Deer, Chital, Hog Deer, Sambar, Rhinoceros

### **Katarniaghat**

Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary is a part of the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve. Managed along with the Dudhwa National Park and Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary, the forests provide strategic connectivity between tiger habitats of Dudhwa and Kishanpur in India and the Bardia National Park in Nepal. Largely untouched, away from civilization and quiet, it is the perfect getaway for those seeking a brief vacation amidst the calls of birds, thick forests



and – if they are lucky and patient enough – a sighting of wildlife. The Gairwa river which flows in the sanctuary area is declared as a sanctuary for crocodiles and alligators. It is also home to rare turtles, freshwater fish and a host of aquatic life. The river presents a scenic view on both banks with long forest tracts running into distance, and overhanging trees on the river bank creating coves that attract visitors on motorboats.

### **Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary**

Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary is witness nature's splendor at its very finest. Situated in Meerut, the Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary spans across an amazing area of 2073 square kilometers. The Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary made its presence felt in the year 1986. The Sanctuary houses an astonishing variety of wild animals that come in all sizes and forms. In spite of being the abode of an entire caboodle of fauna, it can grant totally separate ecological niches to the different creatures; thanks to its incredibly spacious interiors.

### **Kaimoor Wildlife Sanctuary**

Well diffused across a pulsating plot of approximately 500 square kilometers along the perimeter that marks the demarcation between the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, The Kaimoor Wildlife Sanctuary is one of those tourist destinations that bears the uncanny power to thrill and enchant you. It came into existence in the year 1982. The Sanctuary besides hosting a wide array of fauna, also houses exquisite species of trees that augments the scenic grandeur of this sanctuary to tremendous levels. The diverse species of flora that exemplifies this place are Sheesham Teak, Saal, Mahua, Jamun, Siddha, Salai, Koraiya, Jheengar.

### **Ranipur Wildlife Sanctuary**

The Ranipur Wildlife Sanctuary harbors a wide variety of wildlife. Some of the most prominent attractions are Tigers, Leopards, Sloth Bear, Peafowl, Spur Fowl, Jungle Fowl, Painted Partridge, Fishing Cat, Chinkara.

### **Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary**

A welcome pause midway on the Lucknow-Kanpur highway, The Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary witnesses Siberian cranes, among the scores of migratory bird species, that rest here.

## **4.16 Major Fairs and Festivals of Uttar Pradesh organised by UP Tourism**

- **Taj Mahotsav, Agra (February)**

Taj Mahotsav, one of the most eagerly awaited festivals, is celebrated from 18th to 27th February every year in Agra. This 10 days long carnival is actually a vibrant platform that gives information on India. India's rich arts, crafts, cultures, cuisine, dance and music is displayed here. Taj Mahotsav is a major hit among the tourists and is a source to increase tourist footfalls in Uttar Pradesh.



- **Lucknow Mahotsav, Lucknow (November-December)**  
The Lucknow Mahotsav relieves the rich culture and glory of this city of great historic importance. The splendours of Awadh is a major attraction of this festival. The evenings are made lively by traditional music and dance along with local crafts and cuisines.
- **Ganga Water Rally, Allahabad-Varanasi (November)**  
The Ganga Water Rally provides an opportunity to tourists to explore scenic beauty along the Ganga river with historical ghats on its bank. A 4 day expedition starting from Allahabad to Varanasi through Mirzapur and Chunar is organised in the month of November. The Ganga Water Rally is the first major water sporting events of its kind in the state to celebrate the spirituality of the divine river.
- **Buddha Mahotsav, Kushi Nagar (February), Sarnath, Sravasti, Kaushambi, Sankisa (May), Kapilvastu (December)**  
The birthplace of the Buddha, Uttar Pradesh's unique Buddhist festival, the Buddha Mahotsav, held in April-May, takes one on a fascinating journey through the Buddhist world. It is a celebration of Lord Buddha's life. Lord Buddha had spent his childhood at Kapilvastu; delivered his first sermon at Sarnath while at Sravasti he passed 27 monsoons. He showed his divine miracles in Sankisa before attaining Mahaparinirvan at Kushinagar.
- **Kajari Mahotsav, Mirzapur (August)**  
It is among the famous festivals of Mirzapur. Kajari, derived from the Hindi word Kajra is a genre of Hindustani classical music singing, popular in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. It is often used to describe the hanging in the summer skies, and the style is notably sung during the rainy season. UP Tourism along with District Administration organizes a two days cultural Programme in Mirzapur as a tribute to this exclusive musical art form of Mirzapur in the month of August.
- **Ganga Mahotsav , Varanasi (November)**  
A festival only one of its kind, certainly doubles the attraction of this city of temples, ghats and traditions. The classical music rendered by maestros during the festival imparts an unforgettable flavour. The five-day-long Ganga Mahotsav is its message of faith and culture, that increase with the daily Shilpa Mela and the unique Dev Deepawali with innumerable 'Diyas' or earthen lamps in chain, lit by devotees, is a mystical spectacle.
- **Ayurveda Jhansi Mahotsav , Jhansi (November)**  
Ayurved Jhansi Mahotsav is celebrated every year for five days in the month of November. The annual five day occasion is celebrated with much pomp and enthusiasm in Jhansi. Ayurvedic medicines and herbs are showcased along with display of art and handicraft items. It is followed by song, dance and poetry reading.





- Shopping Festival, Noida (October-November)**  
 This festival organised at the prominent industrial hub of the state is a mega show of arts, crafts and cuisine. It has emerged as a major crowd puller because of its close proximity to Delhi.
- TAJ Balloon Festival, Agra**  
 To boost leisure/adventure tourism and aviation based entertainment in the state, Uttar Pradesh Government organize TAJ Balloon Festival in Agra. This festival is being organized to promote the 'Taj City' as a Leisure/ adventure sport destination. During the TAJ Balloon Festival, a Night Glow Concert will take place where hot air balloons will light up in sync with live music. Hot Air Ballooning concept is the latest aviation & adventure sport to attract adventure tourist in UP.
- UP Bird Festival, Chambal**  
 This is an first of its kind initiative by the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Shri Akhilesh Yadav to hold a Bird Fair in Uttar Pradesh to promote eco-tourism in the state. The festival takes place on the grounds of the Chambal Safari Lodge. During this festival prominent ornithologist, professional photographers and renowned artists participate during this event.

## Other fairs and Festivals of Uttar Pradesh

### Holi

Commonly known as the festival of colours, Holi marks the onset of spring. Celebrated with great spirit, in the month of march, Holi has turned out to be a national festival of India. Holi marks the triumph of good over evil and is celebrated with grand extravaganza throughout Uttar Pradesh. Legend has it that Lord Krishna, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, in human form celebrated holi with the Gopis (cowherd maids). To commemorate this tradition with honor, in Braj, holi celebrations continues for more than a week.

### Deva Mela

Deva mela, is annually held at Deva, 10 km from Barabanki at the revered shrine of the Haji Waris Ali Shah. Held in months of October and November, Deva mela at Barabanki show-cases the spirit of communal harmony in Uttar Pradesh and India. Fundamentally a religious fair, the mela features games, music, poetry conferences and great shopping opportunities and attracts devotees from all over India, Pakistan and from parts of the Middle East as well. The cattle fare is the highlight of Deva mela.

### Janamashtami

Janmashtami is a festival that marks the birth of Lord Krishna. It is celebrated in its highest form in Mathura and Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh. Its a grand affair in Mathura and the occasion is celebrated with a great deal of enthusiasm and happiness.



### **Kailash Fair**

The Kailash fair is held at Kailash which lies at a distance of hardly 12 kilometers from Agra. It is undoubtedly a colorful carnival. The Kailash fair is known to be celebrated in honor of Lord Shiva. As the legend goes, Lord Shiva himself came to this sacred place in the disguise of a stone lingam. This has an immense value to the devotees who firmly believe in such legends.

### **Ramnavami Mela**

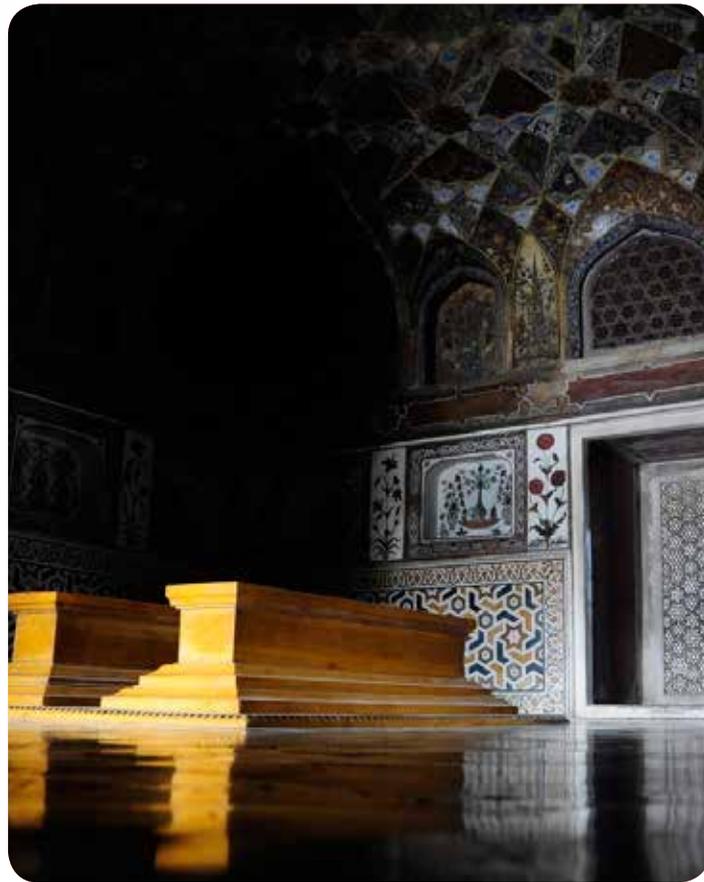
Ramnavami Mela in Ayodhya marks the birth anniversary of Lord Rama. It is usually celebrated in the month of Chaitra according to the Indian calendar which generally corresponds to the March or April of the English calendar. The mela is a testimonial of love, faith and devotion of the people in the state for their great hero Ramchandra, the central character of the Indian epic Ramayana. The Ramnavami Mela, Ayodhya is dedicated to Lord Rama. Devotees gather in large numbers in the temples of Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh to celebrate the Ramnavami Mela which is the birth place of Rama. They celebrate the occasion with extreme joy and enthusiasm.

### **Kumbh Mela**

The Kumbh Mela, believed to be the largest religious gathering on earth is held every 12 years on the banks of the 'Sangam'- the confluence of the holy rivers Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati. The Mela alternates between Nasik, Allahabad, Ujjain and Haridwar every three years. The one celebrated at the Holy Sangam in Allahabad is the largest and holiest of them.







**5 | FICCI-MRSS India  
12 point Roadmap for  
growth of Inbound Tourism  
in Uttar Pradesh**

# FICCI-MRSS India 12 point Roadmap for growth of Inbound Tourism in Uttar Pradesh



## 1. Promoting UP as a tourist destination

There is an urgent need to promote Uttar Pradesh tourism to foreign visitors and all international markets. The tourism ministry should surely pursue aggressive online and other marketing strategies to promote UP as a must-visit location. Seminars and talk shows would also be of great help for this. Regulatory and policy changes may be introduced in order to increase international tourist inflow. Joint marketing programmes may be developed, usage of publicity materials (attractive brochures, advertisements, audio video presentations, documentary films, radio jingles, social media creatives and television advertisements may be promoted with increased involvement of local travel trade partners for promoting tourism in the various regions. Internet has revolutionized the provision of tourism services and products and has enabled the direct communication between suppliers and consumers. It has introduced greater flexibility and instant access to real time information. The state government should leave no stone unturned to create awareness through all available medium.

## 2. Heritage buildings to be maintained

The historic monuments are the biggest charm of India and specially Uttar Pradesh. An effective solution for this would be to outsource the maintenance and exterior lighting of the heritage monument to corporate giants in return for some branding opportunity at the monument.

## 3. Create experiences, not just tourist spots

A visitor should go back enriched in knowledge and with a sense of a great experience. To make this happen steps can be taken to make the tour replete with tour guides, activities for the children, culinary tours, interactivity for the tourist with the culture of the place etc. New tourist destinations may be identified and further developed for offering innovative tourism products or experiences.

## 4. Build great roads and access points

Create better infrastructure and the last mile connectivity. Good roads and approach points to a certain tourist destination will boost the traffic flow. Tour packages, easy bus connections and safe car hire services with knowledgeable personnel combines with great highways would mean an unmatched tourist experience. Private sector investments may



be encouraged for boosting infrastructure development. Seamless travel may be facilitated across integrated circuits. Improvements in highway infrastructure such as petrol pumps, clean drinking water kiosks and sanitation facilities, road signages etc. are a must.

### **5. Sell niche tourism areas separately**

Customized travel experiences, luxury spa sessions, rare animal sanctuaries, religious pilgrimage tours are what the foreign travellers believe in. UP tourism should focus on how it has something on offer for everyone in every category with all budgets. There is enough opportunity in Uttar Pradesh to promote medical, wellness and spiritual tourism in the state. MICE destinations should be encouraged as tourism for the purpose of Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions are no longer limited to big cities. Uttar Pradesh has cities where domestic and international business events and conferences can be facilitated.

### **6. Safety and Security**

India has recently taken a beating in this area with the various untoward cases happening in the country about safety and security. With rise in number of women travelers both in terms of domestic as well as foreign tourists, ensuring their safety has emerged as a major concern. While steps have already been initiated in this direction, there is a need for ensuring effective implementation of the policies and actions drafted to ensuring safety and security of tourists. Uttar Pradesh's image needs to be projected as a safe and secure tourist destination for all tourists.

### **7. Skill upgradation**

The hospitality industry should be well groomed and also be able to deliver their best while providing service to the visitors. Investing in training schools will help the young generation focus on the job and acquire adequate skills to make the experience worthwhile. Appropriate knowledge about the destination and its history is a must for the guides that take the tourists around. Procedural knowledge on visa/ passports for foreign tourists is also a job in hand. Training and skill development programmes must be introduced for not only meeting the anticipated manpower shortfall but also develop an adequately skilled workforce, across the state. Local community involvement may be encouraged for better harmony and sustainable growth of the tourism industry.

### **8. Cross promotion and selling**

Cross selling of tourism hotspots of nearby states can help enhance larger inflow of tourists. Package deals should be worked out and engaged for the benefit of the tourists as well as the state. Discounts and offers on group travel is an area which would encourage tourists to bring their family along while on business travel as well. Participation in international events should be encouraged and customised tour packages with competitive pricing may be developed keeping in mind the wide array of visitors along with their budget and travel requirements.



## 9. Launching new initiatives

New initiatives should be launched more frequently and the tourists need to be informed well. Adding newer destinations in the tourist map should be a regular feature in the plan of action. While multiple tourism circuits based on diverse themes exist across Uttar Pradesh, low level of stay durations by both domestic and international tourists indicates the need for more entertainment and leisure activities.

## 10. Promoting Food trail

India is known for its cuisine and there are a lot of food lovers across the world. Promoting Indian cuisine along with tourism can reap benefits in leaps and bounds. User convenience can be enhanced with provision of real time information on the best restaurants in the area and the historical backdrop of its existence along with transport modes and available facilities to enjoy the privileges.

## 11. Appointing Brand Ambassador for endorsement

Different states have been appointing celebrities as their brand ambassadors in the recent past to gain momentum. It is essential to capitalise on their star value and fan following so that UP tourism can get a boost and be well accepted by the people. UP Tourism can be further endorsed by appointing a brand ambassador.

## 12. Promoting area based products

Uttar Pradesh tourism can look into the promoting its state products based on areas frequented by tourists, in addition to the state as a whole. Special attention and thrust on the manufacture of silk in the Varanasi region can be an example of promoting the local handicrafts of select regions. This would interest visitors who would look for specific things from the state directly to visit the place and businessmen to be able to source things in bulk, if needed.

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