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WAYFARER

One Planet. Endless Journeys.

The Brahmaputra, mile by mile

- BIHU: ASSAM'S NEW YEAR, ON THE DRUMS
- KUMAON'S QUIET HILL TOWNS, BEYOND THE CROWDS
- SONGKRAN, AND THE SLOWER NORTH OF THAILAND
- MACHU PICCHU IN 2026: THE NEW RULES, EXPLAINED

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EDITOR'S DISPATCH

Rivers and Roots

A note from the editor

Every place we love has a river somewhere nearby, even if it is hidden under a road. This month we decided to follow the real ones, from a muddy ferry ghat in Assam to a rope bridge in the Andes, and to ask the people who work on them what the water asks of them.

April is also a month of new years. Bihu in Assam, Songkran in Thailand, Vishu in Kerala: communities mark the turn of the season with food, noise and a good deal of generosity. We have tried to write about these as invitations rather than spectacles, and to say plainly where dates and rules may change.

You will notice that our People & Places pages are built from published reporting, and we say so on every page. We have not yet met the people we write about, and we would rather tell you that than pretend. Where you can, buy from them, stay with them and thank them directly.

Write to us about the river you grew up beside. We would like to hear it.

Write to us about the river you grew up beside.

EDITOR'S DISPATCH

- Gitanjali Gautam

April is the month of beginnings along the water. Assam greets its new year with drums on the Brahmaputra plain, Thailand pours water over its elders' hands, Dutch bulb fields turn to colour, and in the Peruvian Andes a bridge of woven grass waits to be made new. This issue follows rivers to the people who live by them, and roots to the people who keep them alive.

DID YOU KNOW

The Brahmaputra is the Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet, the Siang in Arunachal Pradesh and the Jamuna in Bangladesh.

DID YOU KNOW

The Assamese dhol received a Geographical Indication (GI) tag on 30 March 2024.

DID YOU KNOW

Keukenhof's 2026 season runs for 53 days, from 19 March to 10 May.

DID YOU KNOW

Machu Picchu's 2026 daily cap is 5,600 in high season and 4,500 on other days.

DID YOU KNOW

The Q'eswachaka bridge in Peru is about 92 feet long and is rewoven by four communities each June.

DID YOU KNOW

The Moidams of Charaideo in Assam were inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in July 2024.

TRAVEL TIP

Waterproof your phone and documents before Songkran; the water gets everywhere.

TRAVEL TIP

In a bulb region, admire the fields from the path. Stepping in damages the farmer's crop.

Prices, timings, permits and visa notes are approximate - please verify before booking.

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How to read Wayfarer

RESEARCHED	Compiled from public sources; field verification pending.
PROPOSED	A commission, brief or concept - not a published story.
ILLUSTRATIVE	An example itinerary; check times and costs locally.
TEMPLATE	A format showing how offers appear; no real prices.

TRAVEL TIP

Ask before photographing a person, especially at work. A smile and a question go a long way.

PLAN FOR WEATHER

Leave a spare day in any plan that depends on weather, water levels or mountain roads.

Write to us about the river you grew up beside.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DISPATCH

Take as much care as you take; give as much as you receive.

FROM THE LEXICON: AYNI



Photo: · CC BY-SA 4.0

Prices, timings, permits and visa notes are approximate - please verify before booking.



COVER STORY

The Brahmaputra, mile by mile

A river that crosses a plateau, a mountain range and a valley before it meets the sea. How to travel on it, beside it and with the people who depend on it.

RESEARCHED · VERIFY OPERATOR DETAILS BEFORE BOOKING

Photo: Chumfa · CC BY-SA 4.0

FEW RIVERS ASK TO be understood in stages the way the Brahmaputra does. It rises on the Tibetan plateau, where it is the Yarlung Tsangpo, turns south through Arunachal Pradesh as the Siang, and is joined by other rivers as it enters Assam. From there it crosses the whole length of the Assam valley before it moves on into Bangladesh and, eventually, the Bay of Bengal. The Assam government's tourism pages put its length at roughly 1,800 miles, about 2,900 km, and describe it as one of the great rivers of the world.

In Assam, the river is less a feature of the landscape than the thing the landscape is arranged around. It shapes where villages stand, how land is farmed and how people cross from one bank to the other. That is why a journey on the Brahmaputra tells you more about the state than most road trips can.

There are three sensible ways to do it. The first is a cruise. According to the Assam government's river-cruise page, operators run short tours around Guwahati as well as longer trips towards Kaziranga and beyond. The itineraries it lists include village walks, tea-estate visits, craft workshops and wildlife drives. A reply to a question in India's Parliament records that river cruises are a regular feature of National Waterway 2, the Brahmaputra, with tourists travelling between Kaziranga and Dhubri. Assam Bengal Navigation, formed in 2002, describes itself as the first operator on the river. Itineraries, prices and sailing dates change from season to season, so ask operators for written schedules.

The second way is to travel as many Assamese do, by public ferry. Where bridges are far apart, ferries still carry passengers, bicycles, goods and livestock between the banks. A short ride from a Guwahati ghat to the temple island of Umananda is an easy first taste. Longer crossings, such as the one to Majuli from Jorhat district, are covered in other pages of this magazine and are best done on the operator's published timetable, with room for delays.

The third way is to stay on land and keep returning to the water. Base yourself in Guwahati for the ghats and the river promenade, then travel upstream to Sivasagar for the old Ahom capital, or to Kaziranga for the grassland that the river's floods renew. The river is also home to the Gangetic river dolphin, Assam's state aquatic animal. Sightings are never guaranteed, and a respectful boat keeps its distance and its engine slow.

Timing matters. River travel is easiest in the drier months and much harder in the monsoon floods, which begin around June. April is one of the last comfortable weeks for the water before the heat builds and the rains return, and it coincides with Rongali Bihu, the Assamese new year, which is covered in the Northeast section of this issue. Check weather and water levels with your operator, and keep a spare day.

A note on how to go well. The river supports communities whose lives are shaped by it. Reporting by Dialogue Earth describes the Mising people of Majuli among the communities whose livelihoods depend entirely on the water. Travel with operators who employ local boatmen, eat at local tables, and take your waste home. Ask before photographing people in their daily work, particularly on a ferry ghat.

If this feature leaves you with one idea, let it be this: the Brahmaputra is a working river first and a scenic one second. The better you understand its work, the more you will see.

At a glance

BEST TIME	Roughly October to April for comfortable river travel; the monsoon (from about June) brings floods and slower, less predictable journeys
GETTING THERE	Fly to Guwahati (GAU); cruises usually start from Guwahati or Silghat. Dibrugarh (DIB) is the gateway for upstream routes.
PERMITS	No special permit is needed for the Assam stretch for Indian citizens. Foreign visitors should check the current rules with an operator, and Arunachal Pradesh needs a separate Inner Line or Protected Area permit.
BOOK AHEAD	Cruise dates are limited; ask operators for written itineraries (provisional advice).
CHECKED	10 November 2026 — operators, schedules and prices must be re-confirmed before booking.



Photo: Rangan Datta Wiki · CC BY-SA 4.0

HOW TO REACH

Brahmaputra river, Guwahati to Kaziranga, Assam

AIRPORT	Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport, Guwahati (GAU), about 25 km from the city centre.
RAILWAY	Guwahati railway station (GHY), one of the main rail heads of the Northeast.
BY ROAD	Guwahati to Kaziranga is about 190–200 km by NH27/NH715 (roughly 4–5 hours). Cruise embarkation points vary by operator.
GETTING AROUND	Taxis and app cabs in Guwahati; short city ferries from the ghats; operators arrange transfers.

Distances approximate; confirm embarkation points with your operator.
Distances approximate - verify.

Official sources: Assam government: river cruises (assam.gov.in); Inland Waterways Authority of India (iwai.nic.in); Dialogue Earth: Mising and Miyah communities and the floods (dialogue.earth)



Photo: SudiptoDutta · CC BY-SA 3.0



Photo: Stefan Fussan · CC BY-SA 3.0



Photo: Sarangakrishnachetia · CC BY-SA 4.0



NORTHEAST INDIA

Rongali Bihu: Assam's new year, on the drums

Mid-April brings seven days of music, food and gifts across Assam. Here is what to look for, how to join in, and how to go with respect.

RESEARCHED · DATES ARE ANNOUNCED, NOT GUARANTEED

Photo: Diganta Talukdar · CC BY-SA 4.0

RONGALI BIHU, ALSO CALLED Bohag Bihu, marks the start of the Assamese new year and the arrival of spring. In 2026 press reports expect the festival to begin on 14 April with Goru Bihu, the day when cattle are washed and honoured, and to reach the new year proper on 15 April, known as Manuh Bihu, the day for people. Some reports describe a seven-day cycle; in many places today the festivities concentrate into about three days. Local observance can follow sunrise and the Sankranti calendar, so dates may vary slightly from place to place, and a state holiday on 15 April is widely listed.

What you hear before you see is the dhol. The Assamese dhol is a barrel-shaped, double-headed drum, and the Government of India granted it a Geographical Indication (GI) tag on 30 March 2024. It is played with a pepa, a hornpipe made of buffalo horn, along with the gogona, a bamboo mouth-instrument, and the toka, a clapper made of bamboo. Together they carry the Bihu dance, which is fast, rhythmic and often performed in groups.

The dress is as much a part of the festival as the music. Many dancers wear the traditional muga or pat silk, and the gamosa, a woven cloth with a red border that is a symbol of Assamese hospitality, is given to guests and elders as a mark of respect. Husori groups go from house to house to sing and receive blessings, and gifts of new clothes are exchanged within families.

Food is the third language of Bihu. Expect pitha, the rice cakes of Assam, and laru, the sweets made from coconut or sesame, to appear on every table. A separate page in this issue explains what to ask about and how to be a good guest at an Assamese table. Rongali Bihu is one of three Bihus: Kati Bihu in autumn and Magh Bihu in January mark other points of the farming year, but Rongali, from rang, meaning joy or colour, is the one that welcomes spring and sets the tone for the months ahead. Its timing follows the traditional Assamese solar calendar, which is why it falls in mid-April every year, close to other new-year festivals across India and Southeast Asia.

How to go well: public Bihu programmes in Guwahati and in Upper Assam towns such as Sivasagar and Dibrugarh are open to visitors, but the warmest invitations are domestic. If you are invited into a home, accept the gamosa, remove your shoes, and ask before photographing people at prayer or at the family table. Book trains and flights early, because Assamese families travel home in large numbers around the festival, and expect some shops to close on the main days.

The festival also depends on craftspeople who are under pressure. See the profile of a dhol-maker in this issue's People & Places, and buy instruments and textiles from makers or cooperatives when you can.

At a glance

WHERE	Across Assam; public programmes in Guwahati, Sivasagar, Dibrugarh and Jorhat
WHEN	14 April (Goru Bihu) and 15 April (Manuh Bihu) 2026, with celebrations expected to continue for several days. Confirm local programmes with district administrations.
GETTING THERE	Fly to Guwahati (GAU), Jorhat (JRH) or Dibrugarh (DIB); trains run to Guwahati, Dibrugarh and Simaluguri for Sivasagar.
PERMITS	No permit is needed for Assam for Indian citizens; check rules for foreign nationals.
BOOK AHEAD	Travel on and around 14–15 April is heavy; book early (provisional advice).
CHECKED	10 November 2026 — dates are as reported by Indian press and listed on state calendars; programme venues must be confirmed locally.

HOW TO REACH

Guwahati and Upper Assam (Sivasagar, Dibrugarh, Jorhat), Assam

AIRPORT	Guwahati (GAU) for the capital region; Jorhat (JRH), about 20 km from Jorhat town and roughly 60 km from Sivasagar; Dibrugarh (DIB) for Upper Assam.
RAILWAY	Guwahati station (GHY); Dibrugarh; Simaluguri Junction for Sivasagar; Jorhat Town.
BY ROAD	Guwahati to Sivasagar is about 350 km (roughly 7–8 hours); NH715 links Guwahati, Jorhat and Dibrugarh.
GETTING AROUND	App cabs and taxis in cities; buses and shared cars between towns. Traffic is heavy on festival days.

Distances approximate; confirm programme venues and travel times locally. Distances approximate - verify.

Official sources: Government of Assam (assam.gov.in); Assam Tribune: dhol gets GI tag (assamtribune.com); Sentinel Assam (www.sentinelassam.com)



INDIA

Kumaon's quiet hill towns: Kausani, Chaukori and Binsar

Three places in Uttarakhand's Kumaon hills that suit slow walkers, tea drinkers and anyone who prefers a mountain view to a mall road.

RESEARCHED · VERIFY LOCALLY BEFORE TRAVEL

Photo: Sujayadhar · CC BY-SA 4.0

EVERY APRIL THE BIG hill stations fill up. Nainital's lake road, Mussoorie's Mall and Manali's approach roads see traffic jams long before the school holidays begin. Kumaon, in eastern Uttarakhand, has quieter options, and three towns work well in combination: Kausani, Chaukori and Binsar.

Kausani, in Bageshwar district, is known for its long view of the Himalayan snow peaks and for its tea gardens. Two places give it a human story. The Anasakti Ashram is associated with Mahatma Gandhi's stay in the area in 1929, when he wrote on the Gita. And the town is the birthplace of the Hindi poet Sumitranandan Pant, whose childhood home is preserved as a museum. These are small, quiet sites, best seen at an unhurried pace.

Chaukori, in Pithoragarh district, sits at about 2,010 m and is regarded as a quieter alternative, with long views at sunrise and sunset. Local guides recommend March to June and September to November as the best months. It is a place for walking among pines, rhododendron and orchards, not for ticking off sights.

Binsar, near Almora, is a wildlife sanctuary rather than a town: oak and rhododendron forest, a viewpoint from which the high Himalayan range can be seen on clear days, and a few forest-department and private stays. Entry rules and fees are set by the Uttarakhand Forest Department; confirm them before travelling.

April is a good month for the Kumaon hills, with rhododendron flowers (called burans locally, and Uttarakhand's state tree) in bloom at middle altitudes. Weather is changeable, and haze can hide the snow peaks by the afternoon; plan early-morning viewpoints. The roads are winding and the distances look short on a map but are slow on the ground, so allow generous time between towns.

How to go well: choose homestays and small locally-run guesthouses, which are plentiful in all three places; carry your waste out with you; and avoid hiring noisy vehicles for viewpoints that are within walking distance. The mountains of Kumaon are living landscapes, with terraced villages above the roads, and a polite greeting goes a long way.

At a glance

BEST TIME	March to June and September to November (local tourism listings); April for rhododendron bloom
GETTING THERE	Nearest railhead: Kathgodam (KGM). Nearest airport: Pantnagar (PGH). Both are a long drive from Kausani.
PERMITS	No permit for Indian citizens; Binsar sanctuary charges an entry fee. Check rules for foreign nationals.
BOOK AHEAD	April and May weekends fill up; homestays often have only a few rooms (provisional advice).
CHECKED	10 November 2026 — road conditions and sanctuary rules change; confirm with Uttarakhand Tourism.

HOW TO REACH

Kausani, Chaukori and Binsar, Kumaon, Uttarakhand

AIRPORT	Pantnagar Airport (PGH), roughly 190–200 km from Kausani; Delhi (DEL) is the practical gateway for most visitors.
RAILWAY	Kathgodam Railway Station (KGM), roughly 120–130 km from Kausani; trains run from Delhi.
BY ROAD	Kathgodam to Kausani via Almora is about 4–5 hours by road; Kausani to Chaukori is roughly another 3 hours; Binsar is about 30 km from Almora.
GETTING AROUND	Hired taxis from Kathgodam; shared jeeps on some routes; local walking.

Distances and times approximate; mountain roads are slow and may be closed after landslides. Distances approximate - verify.

Official sources: Uttarakhand Tourism (official) (uttarakhandtourism.gov.in)



Photo: Rohit Sharma · CC BY-SA 4.0

Prices, timings, permits and visa notes are approximate - please verify before booking.



ASIA

Songkran, and the slower north of Thailand

Thailand's new year is famous for water fights. Beneath the splashing there is a quieter ritual, and in the north it lasts longer.

RESEARCHED · CHECK LOCAL SCHEDULES

Photo: Kazuhiro Nakamura from Sapporo Hokkaido, JAPAN · CC BY 2.0

SONGKRAN, THAILAND'S TRADITIONAL NEW year, is celebrated from 13 to 15 April, and the Tourism Authority of Thailand has confirmed that it will go ahead in all regions this year. The festival is recognised by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage, and to visitors it is best known for the water: pistols, buckets and hoses in the streets, big water zones in Bangkok on Silom Road and around Siam Square, and a general willingness to be soaked.

The water began as a blessing. Traditional Songkran involves merit-making at temples, visiting elders, and pouring water gently over the hands of older relatives to ask for their blessing. The Tourism Authority's own guide notes that regions celebrate differently: Ayutthaya has temple events and a elephant water-splashing event, the northeast mixes ritual with city energy, and southern beach towns such as Phuket hold their own celebrations.

The north is where the pace slows. In Chiang Mai the festival includes longer, more traditional ceremonies than in the capital, and celebrations in some northern places run beyond the three core days. If you want to see the ritual side as well as the water side, base yourself in the old city, take a morning for temples before the water fights begin, and then join the crowd by the moat in the afternoon. Some northern towns also hold processions of Buddha images through the streets.

Practical advice matters here. Waterproof your phone and documents; wear quick-drying clothes and closed shoes; expect heat, since April is among the hottest months in Thailand; and drink water yourself. Not everyone wants to be splashed, so avoid soaking monks, the elderly, babies and anyone on a motorbike. Many offices and some shops close for the holiday, and buses and trains are crowded as Thais travel to their home towns, so book transport early.

Beyond the festival, the north offers temples, mountains, markets and craft villages. If you want to see elephants, research carefully. Choose a sanctuary that does not offer rides or performances, and read the profile of one founder in this issue's People & Places before you decide.

At a glance

BEST TIME	Songkran: 13–15 April (core dates). Chiang Mai and other northern cities may celebrate for longer.
GETTING THERE	Fly to Bangkok (BKK or DMK) then onward to Chiang Mai (CNX); overnight trains and long-distance buses also run.
PERMITS/VISA	Thailand's visa rules for Indian passport holders have changed several times; check the official Thai e-visa and immigration pages before booking.
BOOK AHEAD	Flights, trains and hotels fill early around 13–15 April (provisional advice).
CHECKED	10 November 2026 — dates and visa rules must be re-confirmed with Tourism Authority of Thailand and the Royal Thai Embassy.

HOW TO REACH

Chiang Mai and northern Thailand (with Bangkok for the capital festival)

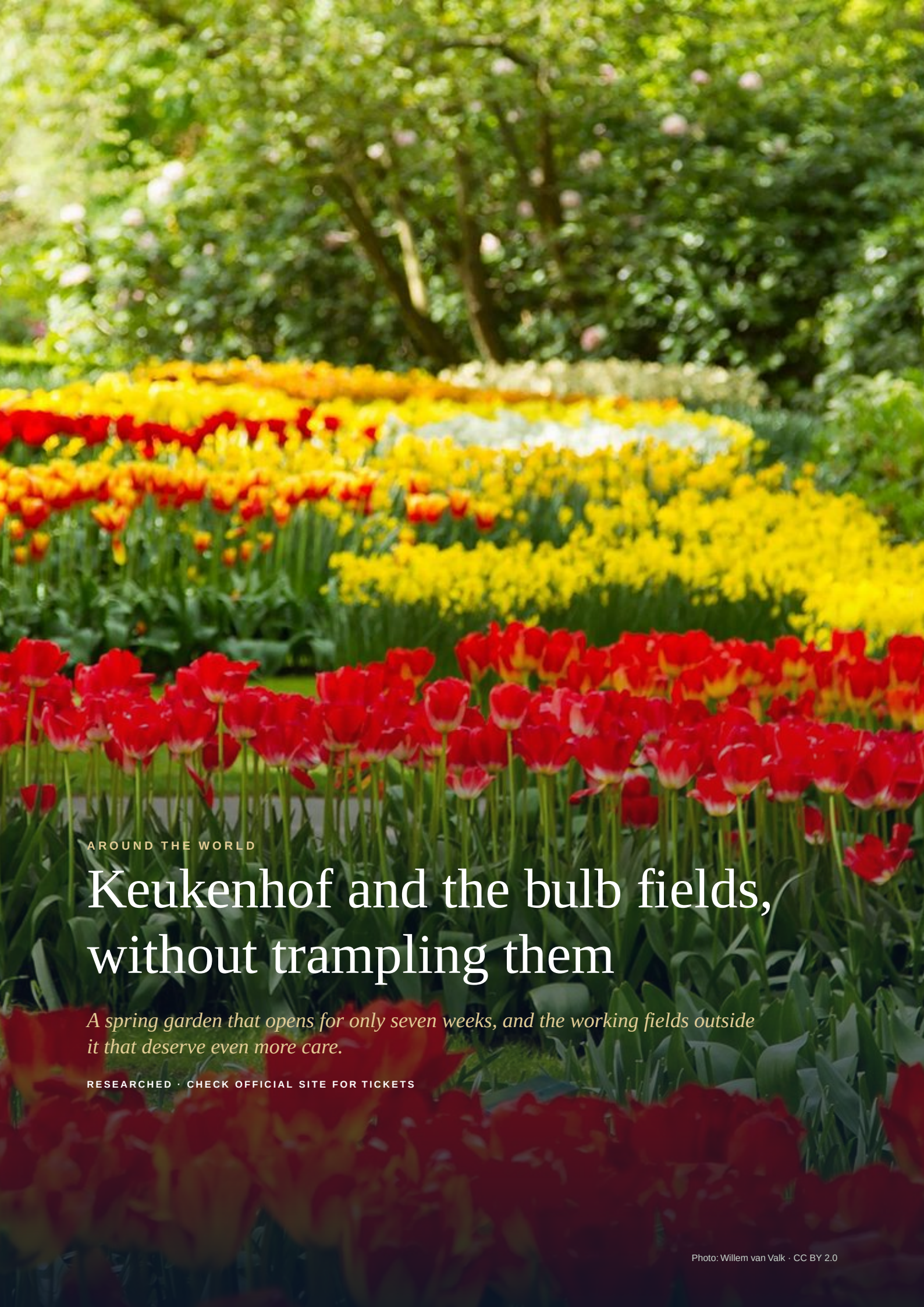
AIRPORT	Chiang Mai International Airport (CNX), a few kilometres from the old city; Bangkok Suvarnabhumi (BKK) and Don Mueang (DMK) for connections.
RAILWAY	Chiang Mai railway station; overnight trains from Bangkok take roughly 11–14 hours.
BY ROAD	Bangkok to Chiang Mai is about 700 km by road (roughly 9–10 hours).
GETTING AROUND	Songthaews (red shared pickups), tuk-tuks and ride-hailing apps in Chiang Mai.

Distances and times approximate; transport is very crowded around 13–15 April. Distances approximate - verify.

Official sources: TAT News: Songkran 2026 to proceed nationwide (26 March 2026) (www.tatnews.org); Tourism Authority of Thailand (www.tourismthailand.org); Thailand e-Visa (official) (www.thaievisa.go.th)



Photo: Prof. Vikramjit Kakati · CC BY-SA 4.0



AROUND THE WORLD

Keukenhof and the bulb fields, without trampling them

A spring garden that opens for only seven weeks, and the working fields outside it that deserve even more care.

RESEARCHED · CHECK OFFICIAL SITE FOR TICKETS

Photo: Willem van Valk · CC BY 2.0

KEUKENHOF, NEAR LISSE IN the Netherlands, opens for a short season each spring. In 2026 the park opened on 19 March and runs until 10 May, a period of 53 days, with daily hours generally from 8 am to 7 pm. Visitors must book a fixed time slot when they buy tickets, and popular dates sell out, particularly around Easter, the Flower Parade and King's Day on 27 April. Book as early as you can, and keep a weekday in reserve.

Keukenhof describes itself as a garden of display: the flowers are planted by growers who want visitors to see their bulbs in bloom. The park changes every year, so what you see in April differs from what you would see in late March or early May. Early in the season, daffodils and hyacinths lead; tulips come into their own through mid-April.

The wider bulb region, the Bollenstreek between Haarlem and Leiden, is a working agricultural landscape, and this is where visitors often go wrong. The fields belong to farmers. Walking into them to take photographs damages the plants and the livelihoods behind them, and growers have asked visitors repeatedly to stay on public paths. Admire from the road or the cycle track, and never pick flowers.

One good plan is to see the garden early in the morning, then rent a bicycle and explore the fields on the cycle paths, with a stop in one of the small towns. Keep in mind that blooming times depend on the weather, so a cold spring delays the display and a warm spring shortens it.

Practical details: Indian passport holders need a Schengen visa for the Netherlands, so apply early. Check the Dutch government's information on Netherlands Worldwide for the current process. Carry rain gear; April weather in the Netherlands is changeable.

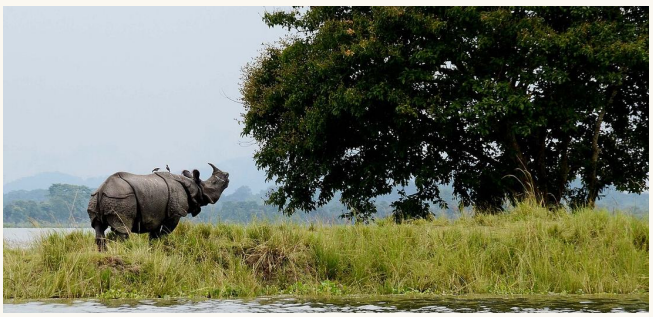


Photo: Diganta Talukdar · CC BY-SA 4.0

At a glance

BEST TIME	Keukenhof season: 19 March to 10 May 2026; tulips usually peak around mid-April, but the weather decides
GETTING THERE	Fly to Amsterdam Schiphol (AMS); public buses and organised shuttles run to Keukenhof.
VISA	Indian passport holders need a Schengen visa; check Netherlands Worldwide.
BOOK AHEAD	Fixed-time tickets are required; popular dates sell out (official Keukenhof information).
CHECKED	10 November 2026 — season dates for 2027 are listed by Keukenhof as 18 March to 9 May 2027.

HOW TO REACH

Keukenhof, Lisse, South Holland, Netherlands

AIRPORT	Amsterdam Schiphol (AMS), about 20 km from Keukenhof.
RAILWAY	Leiden Centraal and Haarlem are the nearest main stations; buses continue to the park.
BY ROAD	Roughly 30 minutes from Schiphol by road; traffic and parking are heavy on peak days.
GETTING AROUND	Seasonal buses from Schiphol and Leiden; bicycles for the bulb fields.

Distances approximate; check the park's transport page for this year's services. Distances approximate - verify.

Official sources: Keukenhof (official) (keukenhof.nl); Netherlands Worldwide (visas) (www.netherlandsworldwide.nl)

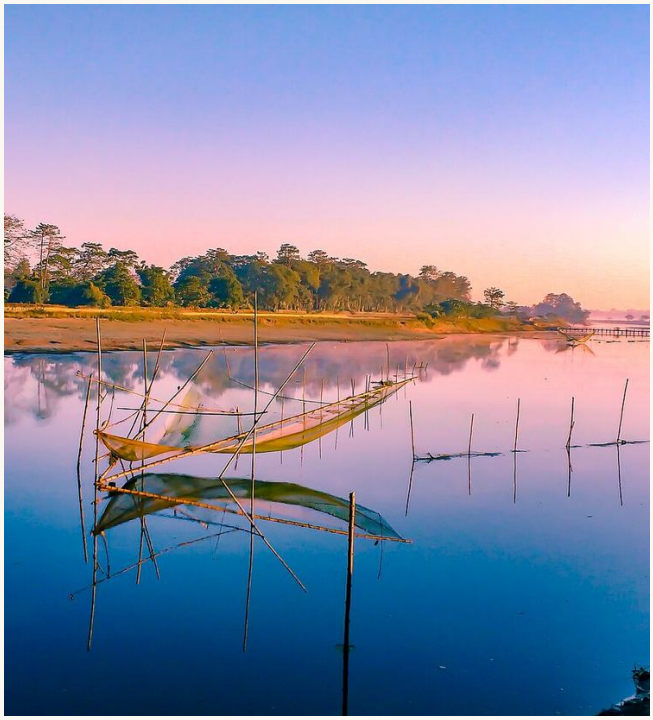


Photo: Udit Kapoor · CC BY-SA 4.0



AROUND THE WORLD

Machu Picchu in 2026: the new rules, explained

Limited daily numbers, three circuits and official tickets only. A planning guide for one of the world's most visited sites.

RESEARCHED · VERIFY ON THE OFFICIAL TICKET SITE

Photo: Diego Delso · CC BY-SA 4.0

MACHU PICCHU, THE 15TH-CENTURY Inca citadel in the Peruvian Andes, is now managed through a rule-bound system rather than a free-roaming one. In a ministerial resolution reported by the Andina news agency on 3 November 2025, Peru's Ministry of Culture set the 2026 daily cap at 5,600 visitors during high season and 4,500 on all other days. High season in 2026 includes 1 January, 2 to 5 April, 19 June to 2 November and 30 to 31 December.

Visitors follow one of three circuits, printed on the ticket. Circuit 1, the Panoramic, includes the upper terraces; the Intipunku gate and the Inka bridge are open only in high season. Circuit 2, the Classic, covers the main designed route and the lower terraces. Circuit 3, the Royalty, combines the designed route with the Huchuy Picchu route in high season. You cannot freely switch circuits once inside.

Tickets are sold only through the official site of the Ministry of Culture. Several travel agencies repeat detailed claims about entry time windows, length of stay and guide rules, and these claims conflict with each other, so rely only on the official ticket site for those details. Entry requires a valid ticket and an identity document or passport. The prices announced for national and Andean visitors (S/ 64 for standard circuits and S/ 112 for mountain routes) apply to a specific category of visitors; international visitors should check the price listed for their category when they book.

A separate ticket is needed for the citadel even if you are walking the Inca Trail. Peru also closes the Inca Trail for maintenance each February. April sits at the end of the rainy season, which means green hillsides, fewer crowds than in July and August, and changeable weather: pack a rain jacket, sun protection and layers.

How to go well: allow time at altitude in Cusco before you travel higher, avoid single-use plastics, and consider a licensed local guide who can explain the site and the communities around it. Book the train and the ticket together, because both are limited.



Photo: Extreminatethejuice · CC BY-SA 4.0

At a glance

BEST TIME	April to October is the drier half of the year; April is the end of the wet season
GETTING THERE	Fly to Cusco (CUZ); then train from Ollantaytambo or Poroy to Machu Picchu Pueblo (Aguas Calientes); a bus climbs to the entrance.
TICKETS	Official sale only through the Ministry of Culture ticket portal; circuit and entry details are set per ticket.
VISA	Indian passport holders should check Peru's current visa requirements with the Peruvian consulate.
CHECKED	10 November 2026 — fees, entry times and circuit rules change; confirm on the official site before booking.

HOW TO REACH

Machu Picchu, Cusco region, Peru

AIRPORT	Alejandro Velasco Astete International Airport, Cusco (CUZ), about 75–110 km from the citadel by road and rail depending on route.
RAILWAY	Trains run from Ollantaytambo and Poroy (near Cusco) to Machu Picchu Pueblo; the ride from Ollantaytambo takes roughly 1.5–2 hours.
BY ROAD	A shuttle bus climbs from Machu Picchu Pueblo to the entrance in about 25 minutes.
GETTING AROUND	Walk or bus between Machu Picchu Pueblo and the citadel; local guides at the gate.

Distances approximate; train times and ticket types change by season. Distances approximate - verify.

Official sources: Andina: Machu Picchu 2026 ticket rates and visitor limits (3 November 2025) (andina.pe); Official ticket site (Ministry of Culture) (tuboleto.cultura.pe); Peru Travel (official) (www.peru.travel)

REAL STORIES FROM THE ROAD

The dhol-maker of Muktapur

As Bihu drums gain official recognition, a maker near Guwahati hopes the honour reaches the people who build them.

PROFILE · FROM PUBLISHED REPORTING · NOT INTERVIEWED BY WAYFARER



Photo: Vikramjit Kakati · CC BY-SA 4.0



Photo: Kangkan.it2004 · CC BY-SA 3.0

The sound of Bohag Bihu is the sound of the dhol, and every dhol has a maker. In April 2024, the Assam Tribune visited one of them: Haren Badyakar, who works in Muktapur, about 11 km from Baihata Chariali in Assam. His father began making dhols there in the late 1980s, and the family has kept the craft going since.

The visit came just after the Ministry of Commerce and Industry granted a Geographical Indication tag to the Assamese dhol on 30 March 2024. A GI tag identifies a product with a place and a tradition, and supporters hope it will protect makers from imitation and open better markets for them.

For Badyakar, the picture is more complicated. The paper reports that he sold about 40 dhols the previous year, mostly around Bohag Bihu, and that the family has no other income. A dhol is a wooden barrel covered with cow or goat skin, and making one takes at least three to four days. He told the reporter that the family had approached the state government several times for assistance without a response, and that he hoped the new tag would prompt some official support for small-scale makers.

This is how traditions are often kept alive: not by a festival's big stage, but by households whose income depends on a few busy weeks each year. For a traveller, the lesson is practical. If you want to bring home a dhol or a small replica, ask where it was made and buy from the maker or a cooperative rather than from a reseller. Be prepared to pay fairly, and listen when a maker tells you what goes into the instrument.

We have not spoken to Haren Badyakar and we are not suggesting he or his family endorse any travel plan. The report is two years old, and prices and circumstances will have changed.



Photo: Rumelade · CC BY-SA 4.0

At a glance

VERIFICATION	Facts and figures are taken from the cited reporting and must be re-checked against the original before print.
REPORTED BY	The Assam Tribune (Himadri Kalita), 9 April 2024
PEOPLE NAMED	Haren Badyakar, dhol-maker, Muktapur (Assam); Rantu Saikia, dhol artist, is also named in the report
NOT INTERVIEWED BY US	This profile paraphrases published reporting. We have not spoken to the people named.
TO FEATURE THEM PROPERLY	Approach through the Assam handicrafts or cultural bodies or a local operator; obtain written consent before using names, figures or photographs.

HOW TO REACH

Muktapur, near Baihata Chariali, Kamrup, Assam

AIRPORT	Guwahati (GAU), roughly 30–40 km away by road.
RAILWAY	Guwahati (GHY) or the Baihata Chariali area stations; Guwahati is the main rail head.
BY ROAD	Baihata Chariali lies on the highway north-west of Guwahati; Muktapur is about 11 km from it.
GETTING AROUND	Hire a local taxi; ask a Guwahati-based operator to arrange a visit in advance.

Workshops may not take walk-in visitors; arrange in advance and respect busy periods. Distances approximate - verify.

Official sources: Source article (Assam Tribune) (assamtribune.com)

REAL STORIES FROM THE ROAD

The man who planted a forest on a sandbar

A Mising farmer on the Brahmaputra has spent more than four decades turning a bare sandbar into woodland.

PROFILE · FROM PUBLISHED REPORTING · NOT INTERVIEWED BY WAYFARER



Photo: Medhi jyoti · CC BY-SA 4.0

In 1979, when he was about 16, Jadav Payeng walked onto a sandbar in the Brahmaputra and found it covered with snakes that had died in the heat after a flood. The Christian Science Monitor, reporting from Jorhat in June 2016, writes that he asked village elders what could be done and was told to plant bamboo for shade. He started with 50 shoots and kept going.

The forest that grew, known as Molai Kathoni after his nickname, covers about 1,360 acres, a size the paper compares with New York's Central Park. It includes teak, mango, banyan and many other species, and has become home to birds, deer and, according to the reporting, rhinoceroses, elephants and tigers. Payeng, a member of the Mising community, lives in the village of Kokilamukh and earns his living by selling milk from his cattle and buffaloes.

Working alone, he watered the saplings with earthen pots hung with small holes so that the water dripped slowly. His work was little known until a local journalist, Jitu Kalita, brought it to wider attention around 2009–10. In 2012 Jawaharlal Nehru University gave him the title Forest Man of India. A documentary, Forest Man, followed, and he later received the Padma Shri.

The story is not only a happy one. The reporting records that around 2008 some villagers who had suffered damage from elephants wanted to destroy the forest, and that Payeng defended it. His next ambition, the paper reports, is to protect Majuli, the Brahmaputra island that is steadily being eroded.

If you travel to Jorhat or Majuli, treat the area as private land and farmland, and speak to your operator before planning a visit. Payeng is a working farmer, and not a tourist attraction.

At a glance

VERIFICATION	Facts and figures are taken from the cited reporting and must be re-checked against the original before print.
REPORTED BY	The Christian Science Monitor (Arundhati Nath), 16 June 2016
PEOPLE NAMED	Jadav Payeng; journalist Jitu Kalita is also named
NOT INTERVIEWED BY US	This profile paraphrases published reporting. Forest area and wildlife figures vary between sources.
TO FEATURE THEM PROPERLY	Approach through the Jorhat district administration, the Assam Forest Department or a trusted local operator; obtain written consent.

HOW TO REACH

Molai forest, near Kokilamukh, Jorhat district, Assam

AIRPORT	Jorhat Airport (JRH), roughly 20 km from Jorhat town; Dibrugarh (DIB) is the alternative.
RAILWAY	Jorhat Town or Mariani Junction.
BY ROAD	Kokilamukh lies on the Brahmaputra a short drive from Jorhat; ask locally for the route.
GETTING AROUND	Hire a taxi from Jorhat; ferries link Jorhat district and Majuli.

Access, ferries and water levels change with the season. Confirm with a local operator. Distances approximate - verify.

Official sources: Source article (Christian Science Monitor) (proof.csmonitor.com)

REAL STORIES FROM THE ROAD

Lek Chailert and the elephants of northern Thailand

A woman from the north of Thailand has spent three decades rescuing elephants from street begging, riding and shows.

PROFILE · FROM PUBLISHED REPORTING · NOT INTERVIEWED BY WAYFARER



Photo: Nina R from Africa · CC BY 2.0

Thailand's elephants have long worked in logging, tourism and entertainment, and the question of how to treat them now sits behind many a traveller's decision. One of the best-known Thai figures in the debate is Saengduean 'Lek' Chailert, the founder of Elephant Nature Park near Chiang Mai.

According to the park's own website, Elephant Nature Park was founded in 2003 in northern Thailand and describes itself as the first elephant sanctuary of its kind in Asia. It says the aim is to rescue and rehabilitate elephants that were used for street begging, riding and circus-style shows, and to let them live a free-roaming life. The herds include blind, crippled, orphaned and elderly animals. The park says it also wants to educate visitors about the endangered Asian elephant.

Accounts of Lek's earlier life differ. Intrepid Travel's profile says she rescued her first elephant in 1992 and set up the park three years later, while an American newspaper account from 2008 puts the founding in 1996. The park's own page gives 2003, which probably marks the move to its permanent site. We have therefore avoided relying on any single date for her early work. Several profiles trace her interest to her grandfather's elephant, which she loved as a child.

For a traveller, the useful lesson is about choosing carefully. Look for a sanctuary that does not offer rides or performances, that explains what happens to the elephants, and that is open about its costs. Ask whether visitor numbers are limited and whether elephants can choose to walk away. Read independent reviews, and be sceptical of any place that promises a close hug or a quick selfie.

Elephant tourism is a debated and changing field, and not every observer agrees about every sanctuary. We offer this profile as one view of an issue worth reading about before you book.

At a glance

VERIFICATION	Facts and figures are taken from the cited reporting and must be re-checked against the original before print.
REPORTED BY	Elephant Nature Park (official site); Intrepid Travel, The Philadelphia Inquirer (2008), VICE; details checked against the park's About page
PEOPLE NAMED	Saengduean 'Lek' Chailert
NOT INTERVIEWED BY US	This profile paraphrases published material and a self-description by the park. Dates for her early work differ between sources.
TO FEATURE THEM PROPERLY	Contact Elephant Nature Park and Save Elephant Foundation for consent, current facts and photographs.

HOW TO REACH

Elephant Nature Park, Mae Taeng district, near Chiang Mai, Thailand

AIRPORT	Chiang Mai International Airport (CNX), roughly 60 km away.
RAILWAY	Chiang Mai railway station, about 60 km away.
BY ROAD	About 1–1.5 hours by road from Chiang Mai; visits are organised through the park.
GETTING AROUND	Visits are booked in advance and include transfers from the city.

Distances approximate; check the park for current visiting arrangements. Distances approximate - verify.

Official sources: Elephant Nature Park (official) (www.elephantnaturepark.org); Intrepid Travel: a life devoted to rescue and rehabilitation (intrepidtravel.com)

REAL STORIES FROM THE ROAD

The bridge that is rewoven every June

Four Quechua communities in the Peruvian Andes renew a grass-rope bridge by hand every year, as they have for centuries.

COMMUNITY PROFILE · FROM OFFICIAL AND PUBLISHED SOURCES



Photo: Jarek Tuszyski · CC BY 4.0

Spanning the Apurimac River in Peru's Cusco region, the Q'eswachaka bridge is about 92 feet long and under 4 feet wide, and is woven from grass. Peru's official tourism agency writes that it is considered the only surviving Inca suspension bridge, preserved close to its original form for more than 500 years. UNESCO listed the knowledge and rituals of its yearly renewal on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2013.

The bridge belongs to four Quechua communities: Huinchiri, Chaupibanda, Choccayhua and Ccollana Quehue, in Canas province. Every year, in the second week of June, they take it down and replace it, with preparations beginning in late May. The renewal is a three-day event.

The work is shared out. According to Peru's tourism agency, women and children braid the ropes from q'oya ichu, a tough highland grass gathered above about 13,000 feet. Men carry out the construction, tying six main cables to old stone anchors on either side of the gorge, and two master builders and two weaving masters oversee the work from opposite ends. The ritual begins with an offering to the mountain spirit, Apu Quinsallallawi, and ends with a celebration. Local people say that skipping the renewal would bring poor weather for their crops.

The bridge is also a symbol of how communities keep their own heritage alive. The bridge is part of the Qhapaq Nan road network, which was added to the World Heritage List in 2014. Local reports from 2025 mention an attack that cut

the bridge and a renewal that went ahead afterwards, with the Ministry of Culture announcing the work; we have not been able to read the primary reports and mention this only as context.

If you plan to visit, check dates with Peru's tourism authorities, because the schedule depends on the community. The renewal is not a staged show, and visitors are guests at a communal work day. Buy local crafts, listen before you photograph, and follow the instructions of the community members.

At a glance

VERIFICATION	Facts and figures are taken from the cited reporting and must be re-checked against the original before print.
REPORTED BY	Peru's official tourism agency (peru.info); UNESCO (2013 listing); Andina reporting on renewals
PEOPLE NAMED	None. This is a community profile of the Quechua communities of Huinchiri, Chaupibanda, Choccayhua and Ccollana Quehue.
NOT INTERVIEWED BY US	This profile paraphrases official and published sources. We have not spoken to the communities.
TO FEATURE THEM PROPERLY	Approach the four communities through the Quehue district authorities and the Ministry of Culture in Cusco; seek consent for any photographs or interviews.

HOW TO REACH

Q'eswachaka, Quehue district, Canas province, Cusco region, Peru

AIRPORT	Cusco (CUZ), the usual gateway.
RAILWAY	Cusco has no railway link to the site; trains run from Cusco only to Machu Picchu.
BY ROAD	The bridge is roughly 100 km south of Cusco; allow a half to a full day for the road trip with a driver.
GETTING AROUND	Hire a vehicle or join an organised trip in Cusco; roads and weather vary.

Distances approximate; access depends on road conditions and community arrangements. Distances approximate - verify.

Official sources: Peru's official tourism information: Q'eswachaka (peru.info); Peru Travel: Q'eswachaka (events) (www.peru.travel)



Photo: Arunachal2007 · CC BY-SA 4.0

FOOD, HERITAGE AND NATURE

The Taste of Travel: an Assamese Bihu table

Rice cakes, sesame sweets and a sour fish curry: what to ask for when you are invited to eat.

RESEARCHED · VERIFY LOCALLY

If Bihu is heard in the drums, it is remembered at the table. Assamese cooking relies on rice, fresh greens, fish, and a handful of distinctive flavours: mustard oil, bamboo shoot, lemon and the local chilli known as bhut jolokia.

At Bohag Bihu, the spotlight falls on pitha, rice cakes that come in many forms: some are steamed, some are fried, some are rolled with sesame and jaggery, others are filled with coconut. Laru, sweet balls made with coconut or sesame, are also common. Visitors who are offered a plate should not be shy about asking for the name of each item and who made it.

A traditional Assamese meal often begins with khar, an alkaline dish made with a filtrate of plant ash, and ends with tenga, a sour fish curry made with lemon or tomato. It is a progression from the bitter and alkaline to the sour, designed to aid digestion. Duck cooked with ash gourd and fish steamed in banana leaf are also well loved.

For vegetarians, Assam is manageable but requires clear communication: many dishes use fish, and some greens are cooked with meat stock. Ask in advance, and stay with a host who can plan around your needs.

At a glance

SAY IT	Ask 'Eta ki?' (what is this?) and ask who made it.
ETIQUETTE	Accept food graciously; ask before photographing a family meal.
VEG-FRIENDLY?	Possible with notice; confirm with your host in advance.

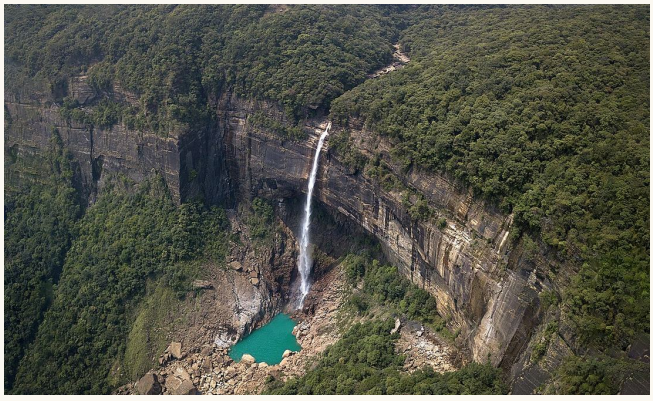


Photo: Vikramjit Kakati · CC BY-SA 4.0

HOW TO REACH

Guwahati and Upper Assam, Assam

AIRPORT	Guwahati (GAU); Jorhat (JRH) and Dibrugarh (DIB) for Upper Assam.
RAILWAY	Guwahati (GHY), Dibrugarh and Jorhat Town.
BY ROAD	NH715 links Guwahati, Jorhat and Dibrugarh; Guwahati to Jorhat is roughly 300 km.
GETTING AROUND	App cabs in cities; homestays often offer home meals by arrangement.

Distances approximate; confirm homestay meals in advance. Distances approximate - verify.

FOOD, HERITAGE AND NATURE

Heritage Without Borders: the Moidams of Charaideo

Assam's newest World Heritage Site is a burial landscape of the Ahom dynasty, which ruled the Brahmaputra valley for nearly 600 years.

RESEARCHED · CHECK LOCAL ACCESS RULES

In July 2024, UNESCO's World Heritage Committee inscribed the Moidams, the mound-burial system of the Ahom dynasty, as India's 43rd World Heritage Site and the first in the Northeast to be listed for its cultural value. The most important group lies at Charaideo in Sivasagar district, the first capital of the Ahom kingdom.

A moidam is a vaulted chamber beneath an earthen mound, built to hold the remains and belongings of an Ahom king or noble. The mounds at Charaideo, covered with grass and trees, look like low green hills on first sight. They are the most visible reminder of a dynasty that governed much of the Brahmaputra valley from the 13th century to the 19th.

To understand the Ahoms, start at Sivasagar itself. The town has the Rang Ghar, an amphitheatre-like pavilion, and the Talatal Ghar, a multi-storey palace, both part of the Ahom heritage. The Sivasagar tank, built in the 18th century, is another landmark. Combined with a visit to Charaideo, it makes a day's circuit.

Practical advice: the mounds are protected monuments and, in places, sacred ground. Follow the staff's instructions, keep to the paths, do not climb the structures, and dress modestly. Check opening hours with the Archaeological Survey of India circle before travelling.

At a glance

ETIQUETTE	Do not climb on the mounds; keep to marked paths; treat the site as a burial ground.
CHECKED	10 November 2026 — opening hours and entry rules must be confirmed locally.

HOW TO REACH

Charaideo and Sivasagar, Assam

AIRPORT	Jorhat Airport (JRH), roughly 60 km from Sivasagar; Dibrugarh (DIB) is the alternative.
RAILWAY	Simaluguri Junction, the main rail head for Sivasagar.
BY ROAD	Charaideo is roughly 30 km from Sivasagar town; the drive takes about an hour.
GETTING AROUND	Taxis or auto-rickshaws from Sivasagar; local guides at the monuments.

Distances approximate; confirm access and hours locally. Distances approximate - verify.

Official sources: UNESCO World Heritage: Moidams (Charaideo) (whc.unesco.org); Archaeological Survey of India (asi.nic.in)

FOOD, HERITAGE AND NATURE

The Natural Calendar: April

What to look for, where, and how sure we are.

RESEARCHED · SEASONAL, NOT GUARANTEED

Tulips and bulbs (the Netherlands): the bulb fields bloom through April, with Keukenhof's season running from 19 March to 10 May this year. *Predictable season; the peak depends on the spring weather.*

Rhododendron bloom (Uttarakhand and the Himalayas): the burans, Uttarakhand's state tree, flowers at mid altitudes in spring, and Kumaon is one place to see it. *Reliable window of a few weeks; varies with altitude and the year's weather.*

Heat and new year skies (Thailand and Assam): April is hot across much of Thailand and the Assam plains, and the new year festivals arrive in the heat. *Plan outdoor visits for early morning and late afternoon.*

Spring migration: many birds begin to move north across Asia and Europe. *A broad pattern; local timing depends on species and weather, so ask a local guide.* Treat every date in this column as a window rather than a promise, and let a local naturalist tell you what is happening this particular year.

FOOD, HERITAGE AND NATURE

Responsible travel: on rivers and with riverside people

Six habits that make a river trip better for the river and for the people who live on it.

PRACTICAL · EVERGREEN

Use local boatmen. Pay for rides and tours at fair local rates. Ferries and village boatmen are livelihoods, and the families of boatmen have seen their incomes change with new bridges.

Keep your distance from wildlife. River dolphins and birds should not be chased. A slow engine and a respectful distance reduce stress for the animals.

Take your waste with you. Rivers collect what is left on their banks. Carry reusable bottles and bags.

Ask before photographing. People bathing, washing clothes or praying by the water are not scenery.

Learn the seasons. Floods are part of a river's cycle, not an inconvenience. Listen to advice on travel in high water, and never take risks to keep to a schedule.

Buy from the people who make things. Fishers, weavers and boat-makers sell directly; support them when you can.

PRACTICAL TOOLKIT

The Changeable-Weather Packing List

April weather in the Netherlands, the Kumaon hills and the Peruvian Andes has one thing in common: it changes by the hour.

PRACTICAL · EVERGREEN

1. **A light waterproof shell:** packable and breathable, with a hood.

2. **Layers, not bulk:** a base layer, a warm mid-layer, a wind-proof outer.

3. **Footwear for wet and dry:** shoes with grip; carry a spare pair of socks.

4. **Sun protection:** a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen, even on cloudy days, and especially at altitude.

5. **A small daypack with a rain cover.**

6. **A waterproof bag or case for phone and documents:** essential for Songkran.

7. **Water bottle and basic first-aid kit:** including any regular medication, in original packaging.

8. **Adapter and power bank:** check the plug type for your destination.

9. **Insurance and documents:** printed and digital copies kept separately.

10. **Flexibility:** leave a spare day in your plan for weather.

PRACTICAL TOOLKIT

The 24-Hour Destination: Amsterdam

One illustrative day. Hours, queues and your own pace will change it.

ILLUSTRATIVE ITINERARY · VERIFY LOCALLY

Early morning: a walk along a canal before the day-trippers arrive; the Jordaan neighbourhood is pleasant at this hour.

Morning: the Rijksmuseum, with advance tickets booked online; choose one wing rather than rushing through everything.

Lunch: a market or a simple Dutch lunch; try a local cheese or herring if you eat fish.

Afternoon: a canal boat ride or a stroll in Vondelpark; the Anne Frank House requires advance online booking and is best planned well ahead.

Evening: dinner in a neighbourhood restaurant away from the busiest streets; the city is compact and walkable.

What to skip if short on time: a second museum; one museum and one long canal walk are enough.

On King's Day (27 April): streets are crowded with street markets and orange-clad crowds; plan accordingly.

Hours, prices and booking rules are not stated here and must be checked on official sites.

HOW TO REACH

Amsterdam, Netherlands

AIRPORT	Amsterdam Schiphol (AMS), about 15 km from the centre.
RAILWAY	Amsterdam Centraal; trains from Schiphol take roughly 15–20 minutes.
BY ROAD	Roads from Schiphol to the centre take about 25–30 minutes; parking in the centre is expensive and limited.
GETTING AROUND	Trams, metro, buses and bicycles; most sights are within walking distance.

Times approximate. Distances approximate - verify.

Prices, timings, permits and visa notes are approximate - please verify before booking.

COMMUNITY

The Traveller's Lexicon: ayni

A Quechua word for the work that communities do for one another.

LEXICON

Ayni — pronounced roughly “eye-nee” — is a Quechua word for reciprocity: the principle that help given today is returned tomorrow. It is often used in the Andes to describe communal work such as harvests or rebuilding, in which neighbours contribute their labour in the expectation that others will contribute in turn.

It is a useful idea for travellers too. Take as much care as you take; give as much as you receive. Like most such words, it carries more meaning than a single English phrase can hold, and should not be treated as a slogan for a whole culture.

COMMUNITY

Travel Quiz — April

Five questions. Answers appear in next month's issue.

QUIZ

1. Which river is called the Siang in Arunachal Pradesh and the Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet?

2. What is the Assamese new year festival, celebrated in mid-April, called?

3. In which country is Keukenhof?

4. What is the name of the Quechua grass bridge renewed every June in Peru?

5. In which country is Songkran celebrated?

Answers (for the editor's copy — reveal next issue): The Brahmaputra · Rongali (Bohag) Bihu · The Netherlands · Q'eswachaka · Thailand.



Photo: ANKAN · CC BY-SA 4.0

COMMUNITY

Your turn: describe your home river

Reader engagement idea for the next issue.

READER INVITATION

Tell us about the river you grew up near, or the one you travelled along: 150 words and one photograph you took. Tell us where it is, what it means to people there, and one moment on its banks that you would not swap. A selection will appear in the Readers' Pages with your name and photo credit, only with your permission.

COMMUNITY

The Traveller's Bookshelf: three books about rivers

Three books we would pack.

RECOMMENDED READING

A River Sutra by Gita Mehta — a novel of stories gathered along the Narmada. Read it for the way a river holds many voices.

Ganges: The Many Pasts of an Indian River by Sudipta Sen — a history of the Ganga from its sources to the sea. Read it to see a river as a shaper of history.

Life on the Mississippi by Mark Twain — a classic of river writing from 1883. Read it for the humour and the sense of a working river.

READER AND CONTRIBUTOR BRIEFS

Proposed commission: “A river I travelled on”

A brief for a real reader or contributor. Not a published story.

PROPOSED COMMISSION · NOT A REAL STORY

What we want: a first-person account (800–1,200 words) of a river journey you have actually taken, by ferry, boat, raft or on foot beside the water. The story should have one clear setting, one specific moment, one human encounter and a changed view.

What we need from the contributor: a true story; photographs you own, with permission to publish; a short trip recap (route and dates, duration, transport, budget range with currency and date, one thing you wish you had known).

Rights: the contributor retains copyright; we ask for permission to publish and archive with credit. We will show

the edited text before publication.

To contribute, write to us via the contact page — and please do not send invented or composite stories.



Photo: Madhumita Das · CC BY-SA 4.0



Photo: Aravind Manickam · CC BY-SA 4.0

THE WORLD CELEBRATES

Festivals & events radar

Dates come from our festival guide and are approximate. Confirm with the official organiser before booking; lunar-calendar and annually announced events are provisional until confirmed.

NORTHEAST INDIA & INDIA

EVENT	WHERE	WHEN (APPROX.)	WHY GO
Rongali (Bohag) Bihu	Assam	14 April (Goru Bihu) and 15 April (Manuh Bihu) 2026; festivities continue for several days	The Assamese new year, with Bihu dance, dhol and pepa, pitha and gamosa gifts..
Shad Suk Mynsiem	Weiking Ground, Shillong, Meghalaya	13 April 2026 (state holiday in East Khasi Hills)	The Khasi thanksgiving festival, known as the dance of the peaceful hearts..
Thrissur Pooram	Thrissur, Kerala	26 April 2026 (main day), with rituals before and fireworks into the early hours of 27 April	Kerala's great temple festival of decorated elephants, drums and fireworks..
Moatsu Festival	Ao Naga villages and Mokokchung, Nagaland	1–3 May 2026	The Ao Naga festival that marks the end of the sowing season..
Hemis Festival	Hemis Monastery, near Leh, Ladakh	24–25 June 2026 (set by the Tibetan lunar calendar)	Masked cham dances at one of Ladakh's best-known monastery festivals..

ASIA

EVENT	WHERE	WHEN (APPROX.)	WHY GO
Songkran (Thai new year)	Thailand (Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Ayutthaya and elsewhere)	13–15 April 2026 (core dates; some cities celebrate longer)	Thailand's new year, with temple ceremonies for elders and the famous water festivities..

EUROPE

EVENT	WHERE	WHEN (APPROX.)	WHY GO
Keukenhof 2026 season	Lisse, the Netherlands	19 March to 10 May 2026	The world-famous spring garden, with timed tickets required..
Venice Biennale (Art)	Giardini, Arsenale and Forte Marghera, Venice, Italy	9 May to 22 November 2026 (pre-opening 6–8 May)	The 61st International Art Exhibition, open for six months..
Midsummer Eve	Sweden (Dalarna is a classic setting)	19 June 2026 (Midsummer Eve), 20 June (Midsummer Day)	Maypoles, dancing and long light across Sweden..

AFRICA & THE AMERICAS

EVENT	WHERE	WHEN (APPROX.)	WHY GO
New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival	New Orleans, USA	23 April to 3 May 2026 (two four-day weekends)	Music, food and craft from Louisiana's communities across two weekends..
Q'eswachaka bridge renewal	Quehue district, Cusco region, Peru	Second week of June 2026 (exact days set by the communities)	Four Quechua communities rebuild the grass-rope bridge by hand over three days..
Inti Raymi	Sacsayhuaman, Cusco, Peru	24 June 2026	The Festival of the Sun, staged each year at the Inca fortress above Cusco..

OCEANIA & INTERNATIONAL

EVENT	WHERE	WHEN (APPROX.)	WHY GO
Vivid Sydney	Sydney, Australia	22 May to 13 June 2026 (23 nights)	Light installations, music and ideas across the city, with a large free programme..

FIFA World Cup 2026	United States, Canada and Mexico	11 June to 19 July 2026	The first men's World Cup hosted by three countries; expect heavy travel demand in host cities..

THE TRAVEL BRIEFING

Format example

Real developments reported before this issue's date. Each item is labelled announced or implemented, with a source.

Machu Picchu, Peru: Ministry of Culture sets 2026 daily visitor limits at 5,600 in high season and 4,500 on other days (announced; Andina, 3 November 2025). andina.pe

Thailand: Tourism Authority of Thailand confirms Songkran 2026 will go ahead nationwide (announced; TAT News, 26 March 2026). www.tatnews.org

The Netherlands: Keukenhof opens for its 2026 season on 19 March, with fixed-time tickets required (implemented; Keukenhof official). keukenhof.nl

Europe: the EU's Entry/Exit System is due to become fully operational at Schengen external borders on 10 April 2026 (announced; European Commission). home-affairs.ec.europa.eu

Tell us where you are going next

WRITE	editor@travaah.com
CALL	+91 70022 09781
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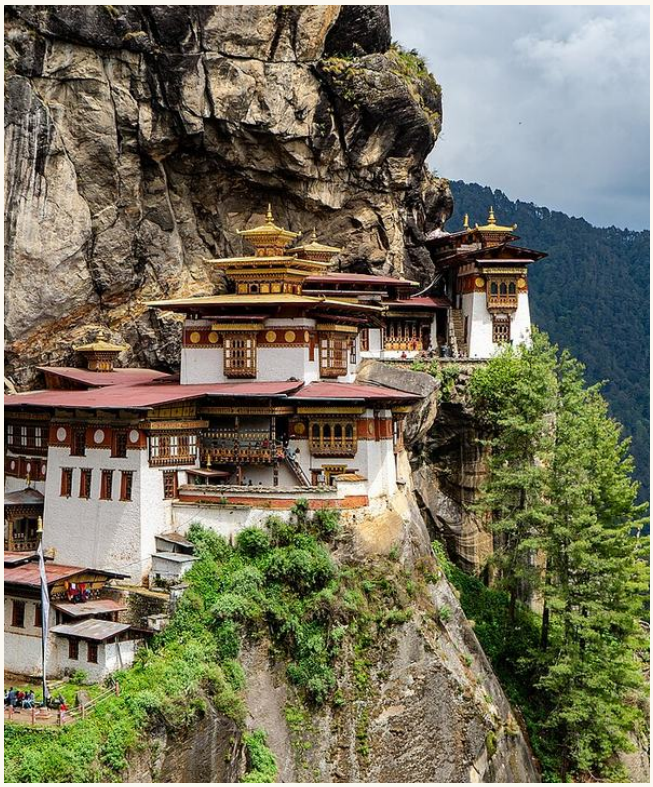


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