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# INDIA'S MOST LOVED *hill stations*

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A COOL GETAWAY TO THE MOUNTAINS IN THE  
HEAT OF THE SUMMER. HERE'S OUR PICK OF THE COUNTRY'S FAVOURITE,  
MOST CHARMING ESCAPES. BY SUNAYANA KUMARI



## FOR ADVENTURE-SEEKERS

### Gulmarg

Nothing compares to hitting the undulating, powder-soft slopes of this Himalayan resort, where visitors can ski at a fraction of the price they pay elsewhere in the world. With improved infrastructure and a gorgeous new hotel, it's easy to see how Gulmarg has emerged as a top destination for adventurers. Rent ski gear from **Kashmir Alpine Adventures** ([www.kashmiralpine.com](http://www.kashmiralpine.com); from ₹2,500 per day). First-timers should look up courses offered by the **Indian Institute of Skiing & Mountaineering** (<http://iismgulmarg.com>; from ₹5,000).

**WHERE TO STAY** The **Khyber Himalayan Resort & Spa** for its sweeping mountain views. (<http://khyberhimalayan.com>) Doubles from ₹22,800.

**GETTING AROUND** Gulmarg is a two-hour drive from Srinagar. Rent a car with **Shah Travels** ([www.shahtravels.com](http://www.shahtravels.com); from ₹2,500 each way), whose drivers can also double up as guides.

### Bir-Billing

Experienced and novice paragliders come to this spot in the Dhauladhar mountains, in Himachal Pradesh, to soar among the clouds at almost 11,500ft. It's a great place to learn by first flying tandem with a skilled instructor. After taking off from the ridge, the scenery comprises snow-capped peaks, expansive tea gardens and Tibetan monasteries glistening in the distance. Certified courses, tandem flights and equipment can be arranged by **PG-Gurukul** ([www.pgindia.net](http://www.pgindia.net); from ₹2,000 per flight) paragliding school.

**WHERE TO STAY** **Colonel's Resort**, close to the gliding spot. ([www.colonelsresort.com](http://www.colonelsresort.com)) Doubles from ₹2,500. **GOOD VALUE** **GETTING AROUND** The drive from Bir-Billing to Chandigarh takes five hours. Hire a car from **Clear Car Rental** agency ([www.clearcarrental.com](http://www.clearcarrental.com); from ₹4,200 each way).

### Rishikesh

Yes, it's great for yoga and all things holistic, but this town, in the foothills of Uttarakhand's Garhwal Himalayas, is also a world-class destination for river-rafting. The mighty Ganga, which flows through Rishikesh, offers Grade III and IV rapids ([www.riverraftinginrishikesh.com](http://www.riverraftinginrishikesh.com); from ₹1,600). The stretch from Shivpuri to Ram Jhula has the biggest ones, namely the Roller Coaster and Double Trouble.

**WHERE TO STAY** **Atali Ganga**, set in a forest reserve, appoints 'activity officers' to take care of all your adventurer needs. ([www.ataliganga.com](http://www.ataliganga.com)) Doubles from ₹11,000.

**GETTING AROUND** It takes half an hour to drive from Dehradun's Jolly Grant Airport; cabs are available to rent at the airport. If you're driving from New Delhi, five hours away by road, book a cab online ([www.getme.cab.com](http://www.getme.cab.com); from ₹4,100 each way).

Calabash restaurant, in The Khyber Himalayan Resort & Spa, Gulmarg. Opposite: Apharwat mountains, Gulmarg