



The first recognised capital of the famous Magadh Empire - Rajgir or Rajgriha is an idyllic city nestled among seven hills. It is sacred not just for the Buddhists and Jains, but holds a special place in the hearts of people of all religious denominations Hindus, Muslims and Christians.

Tourists from around the world congregate to this historical city during the "Rajgir Mahotsav" to participate in one of India's premier music and dance carnivals. The mahotsav celebrates music and dance forms of India at large providing a once in-a-life- time experience to the audience.

The department of Tourism, Government of Bihar, organizes this colourful and cultural event to showcase the rich, cultural and ancient heritage of the state steeped in history besides promoting the traditional values, religious tolerance, historical monuments, archaeological remains, natural landscapes, regional flavour and mysticism that beholds the city.

Celebrities from around the country visit this event. I extend my best wishes for the successful launching a new edition of the coffee table book which shall help Bihar find its rightful place on the World map of Tourism.

"Please join us to celebrate the Rajgir Mahotsav and take back home memories and experiences of a lifetime".



Jitan Ram Manjhi
Chief Minister, Bihar



Rajgir a city blessed with a panoramic landscape and multicultural hotspots - is a centre of great historical, religious and cultural importance. This ancient city has had the distinction of playing host to Lord Buddha, Lord Mahavira, Great Sufi Saint Makhdoom-e-Jahan and Guru Nanak Dev Ji and has been a witness to the message of love, compassion, truth, equality and peace spread by them during their sojourn. Rajgir finds a special mention in the Hindu Puranic traditions as well.

Rajgir, an incredible tourist spot in more ways than one is dotted with places like Gridhakut Hills, Saptaparni Hills, Cyuclopean Wall, Venuvan, Makhdoom Kund, Son Bhandar, Ghora-Katora, Vishwa Shanti Stupa and hot water springs with medicinal value attracts tourists and pilgrims from all corners of the world.

Rajgir Mahotsava is one of the most extravagant cultural events of India that celebrates the historical glory and traditional customs of the country which finds expression in the rich classical, folk music and dance forms.

I congratulate the Department of Tourism of Bihar, for bringing out this new edition of coffee table book on the occasion of Rajgir Mahotsava, 2014 for promotion of Rajgir as an incredible tourist spot on the World tourist map.



Javed Iqbal Ansari
Minister, Tourism
Government of Bihar



Rajgir Mahotsav provides us with an opportunity to showcase the ancient culture, heritage and religious diversity of Bihar. It is melange of music and dance forms spun around the two major world religions Buddhism and Jainism which is equally at ease with celebrating the cultural heritage of other major world religions in this part of world.

I am delighted that the Department of Tourism, Government of Bihar is bringing out a new edition of the coffee table book which shall bring in perspective the various facets of culture and tourism in Bihar.



Anjani Kumar Singh, I.A.S
Chief Secretary,
Government of Bihar



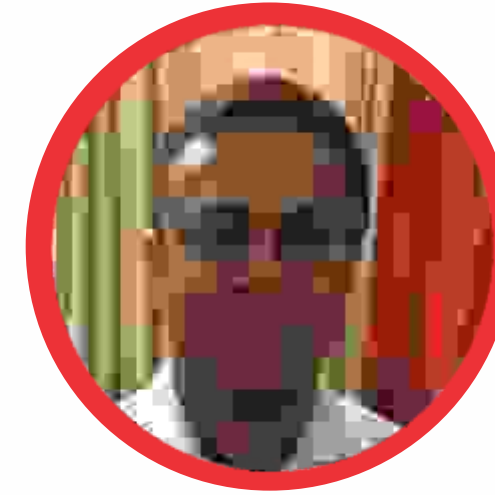
It is hearting to know that Rajgir Mahotsava 2014 which is being held amidst the serene and picturesque place at Rajgir, will showcase the cultural, religious, historical, traditional richness of the state. This event is an ideal occasion for domestic and foreign tourist to acquaint themselves of the significant tourist places and rich cultural heritage of Bihar.

I am glad to know that of Department of Tourism, Government of Bihar is bringing out a new addition of Coffee Table book on this occasion. I am sure the book will unfold many useful information hither to unknown to many visitors.

While complementing the Department of Tourism and District Administration, Nalanda the co-host of this event I extend my heartfelt good wishes for the success of this Mahotsava.



S. K. Negi
Development Commissioner,
Bihar



Bihar as a state has enormous potential for tourism and Rajgir Mahotsav is being positioned as the vehicle for promoting holistic tourism in the state. With the world famous archeological Nalanda University ruins, Bodhgaya - the land of enlightenment of Gautam Buddha and Pawapuri - the land of Mahaparinirvan of the 24th Tithankar of Jainism Lord Mahavira nearby, the idea behind organising a 15 day cultural soiree is to target the world tourists at large and domestic tourists in particulars.

The department of Tourism in tandem with the District Administration, Nalanda and other departments of the state government shall be highlighting various facets of tourism in Bihar by way of organising Art & Craft village, Mahila Mahotsav, Book Fair and other sporting activities besides organising dance & music soiree of International standard.

The idea behind launching a new edition of coffee table book is to update the target population- tourists and receive a feedback to the effect which shall serve as pathfinder for future endeavors.



Dr. Deepak Prasad
Principle Secretary, (Tourism)
Government of Bihar

INDEX

Rajgir ----- 07 - 09

Magadh ----- 10 - 11

Most Eminent People ----- 12 - 21

The Buddha

Mahavira

Jarasandha

Bimbisara & Ajatshatru

First Buddhist Council ----- 22 - 23

Archaeological Spots ----- 26 - 41

Jarasandha Ka Akhara (Rana Bhumi)

Jarasandha Ki Baithak (Peepal Cave)

Chariot Wheel Mark & Shell Character

Giriyak Stupa

Parwati

Cyclopean Wall

Treasure of Bimbisara (Sone Bhandar)

Bimbisara Jail and Ajatshatru Fort

Ajatshatru Stupa

Maniyar Matth

Remains of Stupa

Pilgrimage Sites ----- 42 -63

BUDDHIST CIRCUIT - 42 - 51

Griddhakoot Hill

Venuvana Vihar

Saptaparni Caves

Jethiyan

Hansa Stupa

Indrashala Cave

Vishwa Shanti Stupa

Japanese Temple

HINDU CIRCUIT - 52 - 57

Vana Ganga

Brahma Kund

Lakshmi Narayan Temple

Jara Devi Temple

JAIN CIRCUIT - 58 - 61

Jain Temple On 5 Hills

Veerayatan

SUFI CIRCUIT - 62

Makhdum Kund

SIKH CIRCUIT - 63

Shri Guru Nanak Sheetal Kund

Walking In The Nature ----- 64 - 69

Ghorakatora Lake

Pandwa Pushkarni Pokhar

Hot Water Springs

Ambedkar Mrig Vihar

Pant Sanctuary

Major Attractions ----- 70 - 77

Jeevak Amarvan

Aerial Ropeway

Five Major Hills

Rajgir International Convention Center

Nearby Attractions ----- 78 - 91

Ruins of Nalanda University Complex

Xuanzang Memorial Hall

Nalanda Museum

Badgaon Sun Temple

Kundalpur Jain Temple

Pawapuri Jal Mandir

Samosaran Jain Temple

Chhoti Dargah, Biharsharif

Tomb Of Ibrahim Baya

Wat Thai Temple

Festival – Art – Craft & Food ----- 92 - 95

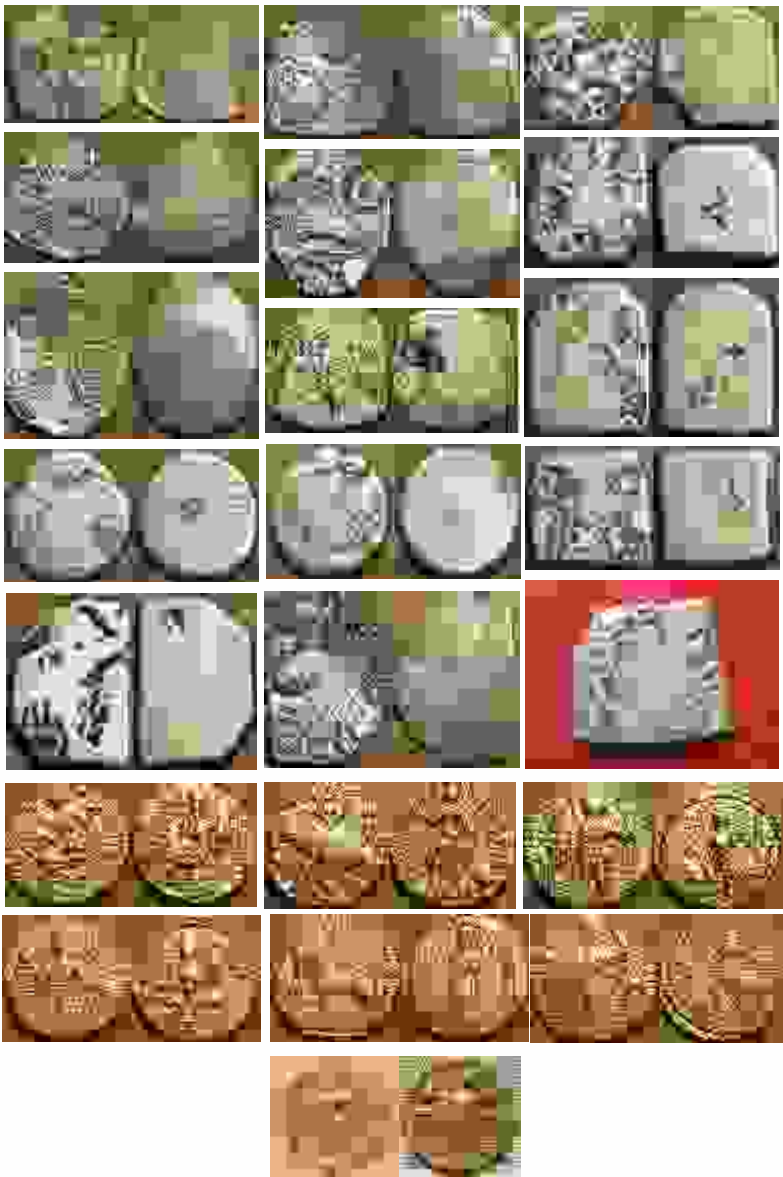
Silao Khaaja

Nepura Village

Rajgir Mahotsava

Mala Masa Mela

Makar Sankranti Mela



RAJGIR



Once a capital city that has been witnessing human history for over 2500 years and thus the name of it had been renamed again and again, comes as no surprise. A treasure trove of fictions and facts melt with the layers of historical remains, in which the archaeologists and scholars do their best to reconstruct the past. This place was one of the forerunners in bringing changes in the socio-economic scenario with the dawn of urbanization in Indian subcontinent.

The epic of Ramayana mentions this place as Vasumati, founded by the King Vasu who was Hindu God Brahma's son. The present name Rajgir, however, is an abridged colloquial form of Rajagriha which means in Sanskrit 'The abode of kings'. According to some scholars King Mahagovinda was the founder of the city around 6th century BC. The epic Mahabharata refers this city as Girivraj which was the capital of the notorious Jarasandha the king of Magadha which was spread over the present state of Bihar. Created by Mother Nature, the valley snuggled by five hill ranges was aptly connected with the Hills (Giri). This city witnessed Gautama while in search of the Truth and was able to draw Him back to its nest after He attained enlightenment to be the Buddha's seat of spreading Dhamma. The Buddhist texts mention that this fortified city of Rajagriha had 32 main gates and 64 smaller gates to enter the capital of Bimbisara and Ajatshatru, the then kings of Magadha. Later, the city went through another renaming as Kusagrapura as narrated by Xuanzang and Jain texts. Presently it is located at 90 Km South of Patna, the capital of Bihar.

The numerous caves of the surrounding hills provided an ideal shelter for the ascetics and hermits seeking spiritual wisdom. The illumined footprints of these great seers have become the pilgrimages for Buddhist, Jain, Hindu and Muslim followers since thousands of years. The Hindu Puranas (texts) mentions that about 35 kings ruled at this place before Bimbisara ascended its throne. The ruin of the fortification wall that runs across the hills and the valley proves that it must have been the target of the neighboring enemy kings for its prosperity. However, all the material richness perishes one day but the energy that the spirituality radiates, still continues. Now, Rajgir thrives as the confluence of millions of believers from multiple religions, seeking peace in spirituality.

The city attracts not only pilgrims but also the common tourists for its breathtaking natural attractions of mountain valley, hot-springs, aerial rope-way, lakes and forests. The archaeological and historical sites of the grand stupas and temples are also great attractions for scholars as well. The present Government endeavor to hold various festivals connecting the local traditions are also very popular amongst the visitors and thus enlivens the historical city.

MAGADH

Strongest Empire Of An Era

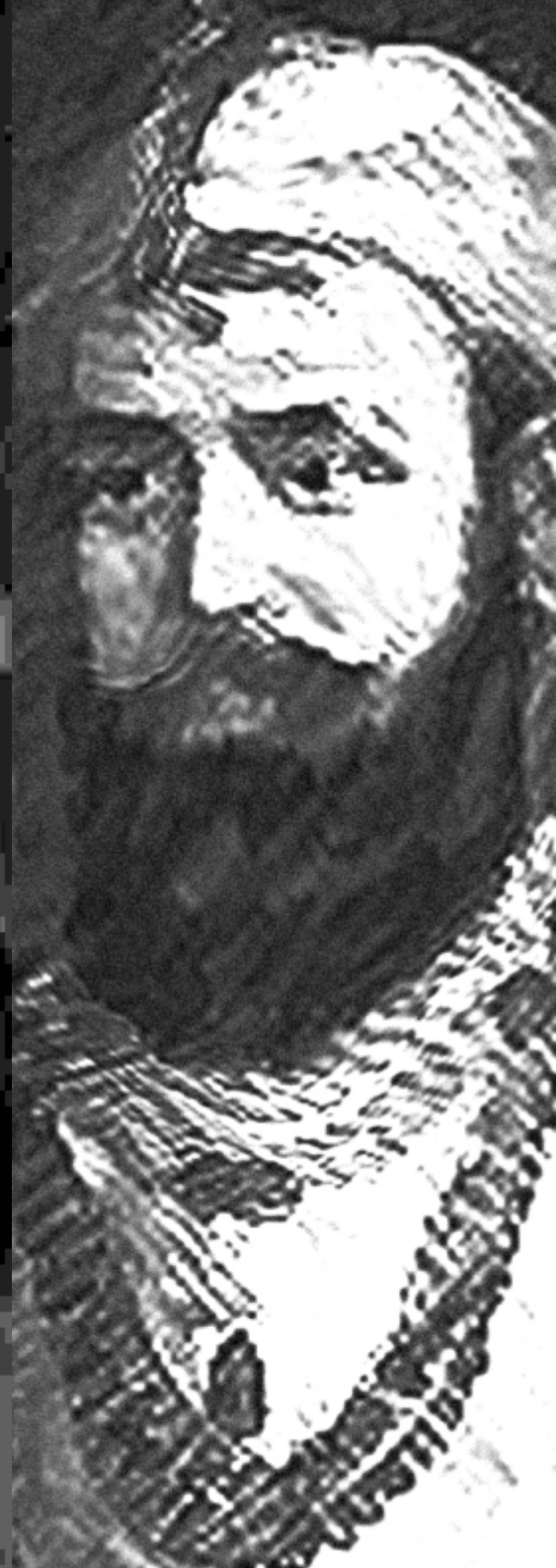


Originally one of the sixteen Maha-Janapadas in ancient Northern Indian subcontinent, Magadha emerged around the present Bihar. The political, economical and cultural glory of ancient India was flourished in an extraordinary manner in this region. Rajgir was the first capital of the Magadha kingdom around 2600 years back. Magadha had been referred even in Vedas which was much earlier period.

The kingdom was the seat of several powerful dynasties starting from Haryanka Dynasty of King Bimbisara and King Ajatshatru fame and continued to be ruled by Shishunaga Dynasty, Nanda Dynasty, Maurya Dynasty, Shunga Dynasty, Kanva Dynasty and finally Gupta Dynasty when it attained the peak of prosperity in every field.

Under the rule of the mighty kings like Ashoka, Chandragupta Maurya, Chandra Gupta II (Vikramaditya), this region not only became a power house but also emerged as the largest empire of the era with the strongest army base. The kings and emperors were great patrons of education, religion and culture besides promoting trade and commerce with a view of overall development of the region.

It is no wonder that the region is full of archaeological traces left behind and now is the treasure trove of historical references with multiple layers.



MOST EMINENT PEOPLE





THE BUDDHA

The Buddha is not a name but signifies the sheer embodiment of enlightenment itself, as pronounced by the Buddha Himself. Siddhartha Gautama was the son of Suddhodana, the elected chief of Shakya clan who ruled Kapilavastu, around 2600 years back. His mother Maya, wife of Suddhodana died few days after Siddhartha's birth. As per the royal tradition Siddhartha was married to the princess Yashodhara and son Rahul was born. However, the princely comfort and luxuries could not hold him back in the cushy unawareness of a protected lifestyle.

He was deeply concerned with the facts of people suffering from disease, old age and death. He sought for the answer in the prevailing religion but could not be satisfied as there was no solution to the relief from these human sufferings. In His quest for spirituality to find the relief for such sufferings, Gautama travelled many places as an ascetic and finally announced the Way of Life, following which any human being can attain the relief from sufferings. The King of Magadha Bimbisara was deeply impressed with the Buddha's philosophy of life and became a keen follower. He donated many places to the Buddha for his disciples where they can rest in the rainy seasons. Slowly other kings from the surrounding region also became follower of the Buddha. The message of humanity irrespective of material wealth or superior birth ranks that ascends the division of class and caste was first of its kind. To be affectionate not only towards all human beings but even towards the animals is what Buddhism calls for.

The Bodhi-Tree at Bodhgaya under which Gautama attained Enlightenment, became the sacred pilgrimage for millions. The Dhamma that He preached, now known as Buddhism around the world, is a solace for those who seek the light in the dark passage of life. Buddha Purnima, also known as Veshakha, is celebrated on the full moon day of May/June as per the oriental lunar calendars to commemorate the holy events of the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and Mahaparinirvana.



MAHAVIRA

The 24th and last Tirthankara of Jainism was also named Vardhaman. He was born in a royalty who were based in Bihar. He left the royal life and became ascetic to search the meaning of human life.

He was contemporary of the Buddha and the most popular Tirthankara amongst Jains. He spent many years in meditating and after attaining awakening, started preaching, how as human beings we can improve the quality of our life. He taught the compassion (Ahimsa) for every living being and to treat them with dignity and kindness. The tolerance towards other beings is the core philosophy of Jainism besides truthfulness, Satya and respect towards others' property that is abstaining from jealousy or stealing called as Asteya. The chastity or Bramhacharya is the fourth principle and non-attachment, Aparigraha is the last one of his five main teachings. He travelled far and wide in the Indian subcontinent for thirty years and spent about fourteen rainy seasons in the caves and valley of Rajgir.

He attained Nirvana at the age of 72 in 527 BCE at Pawapuri in Nalanda where a beautiful temple is built in the midst of a lotus filled lake.

Bihar is blessed to have been the sacred seat of spiritual guides like the Buddha and Mahavira who are amongst the brightest stars in the history of mankind.



JARASANDHA

Jarasandha, the legendary king of Magadha has been chronicled as a villainous character in Mahabharata. He was son of King Brihadratha. Both the stories relating to Jarasandha's birth and death are described in a gory detail.

A queer tale of his birth narrates that Brihadratha's two queens gave birth to two halves of an infant and the sight was so repulsive that the two pieces were thrown in the forest. Jara, a Rakshasee found these halves and picked up them with the intention to eat but the pieces got joined and the full form of the baby came alive. Jara felt pity for the infant and took it to the King Brihadratha and narrated the incident. The King, the father of the child named him Jarasandha which literally means 'Joined by Jara'.

He turned out to be a torturous king and was physically invincible. He also became an arch enemy of Krishna as Krishna took over Mathura by killing Mathura's King Kansa who was Jarasandha's son-in-law of two daughters. Enraged of losing his widowed daughters' rights, Jarasandha repeatedly attacked Mathura. To avoid the mass killing in a battle, Krishna shifted the capital from Mathura to Dwarka which was inaccessible for Jarasandha.

Finally, Jarasandha was killed by Bhima, the second Pandava brother with Krishna's advice. As Jarasandha became very powerful as Magadha king he is said to have imprisoned 95 kings and was making preparation for offering 100 kings for sacrifice. To help these kings and also to avoid mass blood loss Krishna planned a wrestling dual between Bhima and Jarasandha. It is Krishna who told the secret of killing invincible Jarasandha by tearing his body in two halves, the way he was born. Finally that ended the long dark torturous period for the people of Magadha.



“After the act of killing his father, Ajatshatru came to his senses and started to repent deeply for the sin. He then decided to visit the Buddha at midnight with a grand procession of elephants to relieve his conscience. He begged forgiveness from the Buddha and became a keen follower of Buddhism.”

BIMBISARA AND AJATSHATRU

The great father and son feature in several texts and edicts of that period. Bimbisara who sowed the seed of ambitious expansion of Magadha that was initially one Mahajanapada, but later emerged as the largest and the strongest empire in the Mauryan period. Rajgir was Bimbisara's capital city where he first met Gautama Siddhartha on his way to Gaya in search of the Truth. The wise King recognized the true gem and became an ardent follower of the Buddha. It is under his patronage the Buddhist philosophy spread across the region and the number of followers grew in leaps and bound. There are numerous fables around the valley attached to several of the historical sites. He is also referred as Shrenika of Rajgir in the Jain texts where he is regarded as a dedicated devotee of Mahavira, the 24th Jain Tirthankara.

Bimbisara's son Ajatshatru , however, leaves behind a gruesome tale of bloodthirsty royal power that made him the killer of his own father. Ajatshatru not only killed his father Bimbisara but also said to have tortured him in most inhuman way. Nevertheless, he had been an efficient ruler who saw the potential in present Patna (then Pataligram/ Pataliputra village) as the future capital city. He followed the policy of conquest and expansion and thus attached Vaishali republic and Licchavi in a terrible battle. He is also said to be a close friend of the Buddha's rival cousin Devdatta and together they hatched a plan to kill the Buddha which was foiled by the divine force. Later, he also began believing in the philosophy of the Buddhism and became a keen devotee.

FIRST BUDDHIST COUNCIL (483 B.C.)

During the Buddha's lifetime, the people were magnetized by His speeches and did not think of writing those immediately. The shock of His Mahaparinirvana made them realize the importance of recording His teachings not only for themselves but also for the generations to come. Shortly after the Buddha's demise the first Buddhist Council was held at Saptaparni Hills presided by Mahakasyapa the most distinguished disciple of the Buddha.

The core Buddhist philosophy compiled in written format as Tri-Pitakas was an immense pioneering step taken to preserve and organize the invaluable wisdom. Tri-Pitaka means the Three Baskets of the Buddha's teachings. Sutra Pitaka or Sutta Pitaka in Pali mainly contains description of the Buddha and parables used for teaching philosophical concepts. The Abhidharma Pitaka contains the philosophical and psychological explanations of the teachings. The third pitaka, Vinaya is the collection of rules and conducts for the monks who have chosen to live in monasteries.

It is said that the assembly hall for the congregation of around 500 monks was constructed by the King Ajatshatru. More such councils were to follow this first pioneering initiative, to strengthen the Buddhist philosophy that spread across the world, over the past 2500 years.





CLIMATE OF RAJGIR

How to Reach



Air: The nearest airport is at Patna approx. 90 kms. Indian Airlines connect Patna to Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi, Ranchi and Lucknow.



Rail: Though Rajgir itself has a railway station Rajgir/3Kms yet the nearest convenient railhead is at Gaya 78 kms.



Road: Rajgir is connected by road to Patna - 90 kms, Nalanda - 12 kms, Gaya - 72 kms, Pawapuri - 38 kms, Bihar Sharif - 25 kms etc.



Bus: Regular buses are available from all the above mentioned points to Rajgir. Contact BSTDC



Local Transport: Taxis and Buses and Tongas are available.

The trips in Bihar can be planned in any of the four seasons – Winter, Summer, Monsoon and Post Monsoon. As none of the seasons are very extreme the places can be enjoyable if planned discreetly.

Winter (November to Mid March) is the most pleasant season for planning a trip to Bihar. As it is not very severe winter (4° to 10°) and a bright sun keeping the days warm lots of festivals are organised during this season.

Summer (May to mid June) is hot in Bihar registering the average temperature of 43°. However, the frequent storms and the fresh breeze at the riverbanks at cities as well as in country sides are quite pleasant. The cultivated lands of paddy, corn and wheat fields along with abundant mango groves and rows of coconut trees offering abundant greenery and shades make the summer quite decent.

During the heavy monsoon (July to September) the northern districts should be avoided from the itinerary as the region is prone to occasional floods due to the multiple rivers and nearness to the Himalayan range. The rainfall (over 1400 mm) along the Sub – Himalayan zone falling under the district West Champaran has numerous water bodies along with the rivers Gandak and Kosi and small rivulets. The southern districts are pleasant during monsoon and the rains come in short spells making it enjoyable with the fresh natural showers.

climate



Temperature
Summer: maximum 40 °C, minimum 20 °C.
Winter: maximum 28 °C, minimum 06 °C



Rainfall
1,860 mm
(mid-June to mid-September)



Dry/warm season
October to March